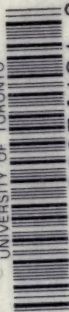
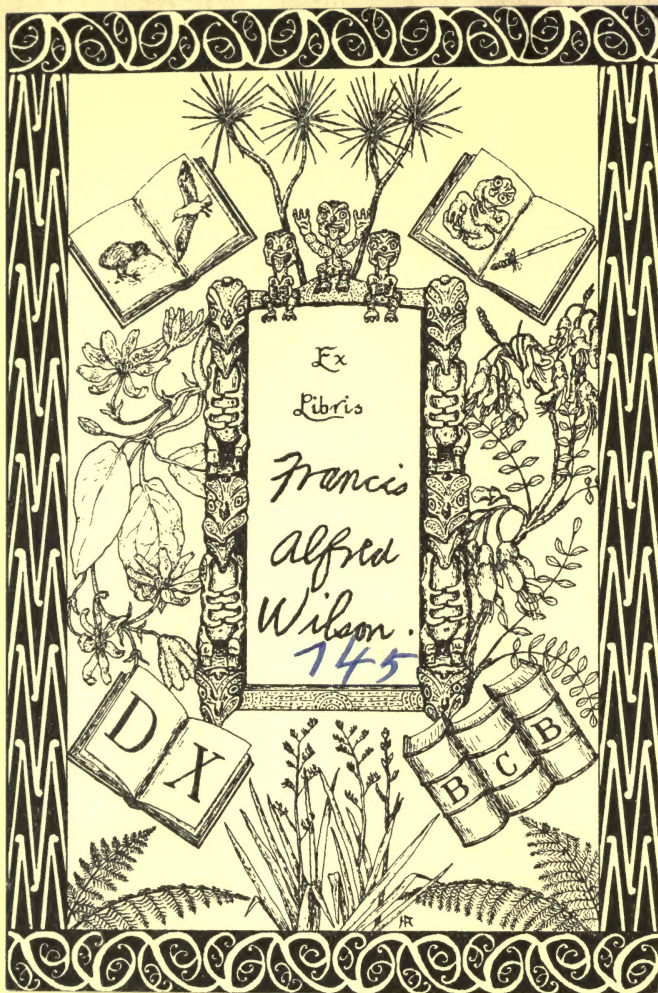


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POPULAR AND HUMOROUS VERSES



# VERSES

POPULAR AND HUMOROUS

BY

HENRY LAWSON

AUTHOR OF "WHEN THE WORLD WAS WIDE AND OTHER VERSES,"  
"WHILE THE BILLY BOILS," AND "ON THE TRACK AND  
OVER THE SLIPRAILS"



*"A hundred miles shall see to-night the lights of Cobb and Co.!"*

SYDNEY

ANGUS AND ROBERTSON

LONDON: THE AUSTRALIAN BOOK COMPANY

38 WEST SMITHFIELD, E.C.

1900



PR  
6023  
A94V4

SYDNEY :  
WEESDALE, SHOOSMITH AND Co., PRINTERS,  
117 CLARENCE STREET.



## PREFACE

My acknowledgments of the courtesy of the editors and proprietors of the newspapers in which most of these verses were first published are due and are gratefully discharged on the eve of my departure for England. Chief among them is the *Sydney Bulletin*; others are the *Sydney Town and Country Journal*, *Freeman's Journal*, and *Truth*, and the *New Zealand Mail*.

A few new pieces are included in the collection.

H. L.

*Sydney, March 17th, 1900.*





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*“ Once I wrote a little poem which I thought was very fine,  
And I showed the printer's copy to a critic friend of mine,  
First he praised the thing a little . . . . . ”*  
page 125.

## THE PORTS OF THE OPEN SEA

Down here where the ships loom large in

The gloom when the sea-storms veer,

Down here on the south-west margin

Of the western hemisphere,

Where the might of a world-wide ocean

Round the youngest land rolls free—

Storm-bound from the world's commotion,

Lie the Ports of the Open Sea.

By the bluff where the grey sand reaches

To the kerb of the spray-swept street,

By the sweep of the black sand beaches

From the main-road travellers' feet,

By the heights like a work Titanic,

Begun ere the gods' work ceased,

By a bluff-lined coast volcanic

Lie the Ports of the wild South-east.



By the steeps of the snow-capped ranges,  
By the scarped and terraced hills—  
Far away from the swift life-changes,  
From the wear of the strife that kills—  
Where the land in the Spring seems younger  
Than a land of the Earth might be—  
Oh ! the hearts of the rovers hunger  
For the Ports of the Open Sea.

But the captains watch and hearken  
For a sign of the South Sea wrath—  
Let the face of the South-east darken,  
And they turn to the ocean path.  
Ay, the sea-boats dare not linger,  
Whatever the cargo be ;  
When the South-east lifts a finger  
By the Ports of the Open Sea.

South by the bleak Bluff faring,  
North where the Three Kings wait,  
South-east the tempest daring—  
Flight through the storm-tossed strait ;  
Yonder a white-winged roamer  
Struck where the rollers roar—  
Where the great green froth-flaked comber  
Breaks down on a black-ribbed shore.

For the South-east lands are dread lands  
To the sailor in the shrouds,  
Where the low clouds loom like headlands,  
And the black bluffs blur like clouds.  
When the breakers rage to windward  
And the lights are masked a-lee,  
And the sunken rocks run inward  
To a Port of the Open Sea.

But oh ! for the South-east weather—  
The sweep of the three-days' gale—  
When, far through the flax and heather,  
The spindrift drives like hail.  
Glory to man's creations  
That drive where the gale grows gruff,  
When the homes of the sea-coast stations  
Flash white from the dark'ning bluff !

When the swell of the South-east rouses  
The wrath of the Maori sprite,  
And the brown folk flee their houses  
And crouch in the flax by night,  
And wait as they long have waited—  
In fear as the brown folk be—  
The wave of destruction fated  
For the Ports of the Open Sea.

. . . . .

Grey cloud to the mountain bases,  
Wild boughs that rush and sweep ;  
On the rounded hills the tussocks  
Like flocks of flying sheep ;  
A lonely storm-bird soaring  
O'er tussock, fern and tree ;  
And the boulder beaches roaring  
The Hymn of the Open Sea.

## THE THREE KINGS \*

THE East is dead and the West is done, and again  
our course lies thus :—

South-east by Fate and the Rising Sun where the  
Three Kings wait for us.

*When our hearts are young and the world is wide, and  
the heights seem grand to climb—*

*We are off and away to the Sydney-side ; but the Three  
Kings bide their time.*

‘I’ve been to the West,’ the digger said : he was  
bearded, bronzed and old :

‘Ah, the smothering curse of the East is wool, and  
the curse of the West is gold.

‘I went to the West in the golden boom, with Hope  
and a life-long mate,

‘They sleep in the sand by the Boulder Soak, and  
long may the Three Kings wait.’

---

\* Three sea-girt pinnacles off North Cape, New Zealand.

‘I’ve had my fling on the Sydney-side,’ said a black-sheep to the sea,

‘Let the young fool learn when he can’t be taught:  
I’ve learnt what’s good for me.’

And he gazed ahead on the sea-line dim—grown dim  
in his softened eyes—

With a pain in his heart that was good for him—as  
he saw the Three Kings rise.

A pale girl sits on the foc’sle head—she is back,  
Three Kings! so soon;

But it seems to her like a life-time dead since she fled  
with him ‘saloon.’

There is refuge still in the old folks’ arms for the child  
that loved too well;

They will hide her shame on the Southern farm—and  
the Three Kings will not tell.

’Twas a restless heart on the tide of life, and a false  
star in the skies

That led me on to the deadly strife where the  
Southern London lies;

But I dream in peace of a home for me, by a glorious  
southern sound,

As the sunset fades from a moonlit sea, and the  
Three Kings show us round.

*Our hearts are young and the old hearts old, and life on  
the farms is slow,  
And away in the world there is fame and gold—and the  
Three Kings watch us go.  
Our heads seem wise and the world seems wide, and its  
heights are ours to climb,  
So it's off and away in our youthful pride—but the  
Three Kings bide our time.*



## THE OUTSIDE TRACK

THERE were ten of us there on the moonlit quay,  
And one on the for'ard hatch ;  
No straighter mate to his mates than he  
Had ever said : ' Len's a match !'  
'Twill be long, old man, ere our glasses clink,  
'Twill be long ere we grip your hand !—  
And we dragged him ashore for a final drink  
Till the whole wide world seemed grand.

For they marry and go as the world rolls back,  
They marry and vanish and die ;  
But their spirit shall live on the Outside Track  
As long as the years go by.

The port-lights glowed in the morning mist  
That rolled from the waters green ;  
And over the railing we grasped his fist  
As the dark tide came between.

We cheered the captain and cheered the crew,  
And our mate, times out of mind ;  
We cheered the land he was going to  
And the land he had left behind.

We roared Lang Syne as a last farewell,  
But my heart seemed out of joint ;  
I well remember the hush that fell  
When the steamer had passed the point  
We drifted home through the public bars,  
We were ten times less by one  
Who sailed out under the morning stars,  
And under the rising sun.

And one by one, and two by two,  
They have sailed from the wharf since then ;  
I have said good-bye to the last I knew,  
The last of the careless men.  
And I can't but think that the times we had  
Were the best times after all,  
As I turn aside with a lonely glass  
And drink to the bar-room wall.

But I'll try my luck for a cheque Out Back,  
Then a last good-bye to the bush ;  
For my heart's away on the Outside Track,  
On the track of the steerage push.

## SYDNEY-SIDE

WHERE'S the steward?—Bar-room steward? Berth?

Oh, any berth will do—

I have left a three-pound billet just to come along  
with you.

Brighter shines the Star of Rovers on a world that's  
growing wide,

But I think I'd give a kingdom for a glimpse of  
Sydney-Side.

Run of rocky shelves at sunrise, with their base on  
ocean's bed ;

Homes of Coogee, homes of Bondi, and the lighthouse  
on South Head ;

For in loneliness and hardship—and with just a  
touch of pride—

Has my heart been taught to whisper, ' You belong  
to Sydney-Side.'

Oh, there never dawned a morning, in the long and  
lonely days,

But I thought I saw the ferries streaming out across  
the bays—

And as fresh and fair in fancy did the picture rise  
again

As the sunrise flushed the city from Woollahra to  
Balmain :

And the sunny water frothing round the liners black  
and red,

And the coastal schooners working by the loom of  
Bradley's Head ;

And the whistles and the sirens that re-echo far and  
wide—

All the life and light and beauty that belong to  
Sydney-Side.

And the dreary cloud-line never veiled the end of one  
day more,

But the city set in jewels rose before me from 'The  
Shore.'

Round the sea-world shine the beacons of a thousand  
ports o' call,

But the harbour-lights of Sydney are the grandest of  
them all !

Toiling out beyond Coolgardie—heart and back and  
spirit broke,

Where the Rover's Star gleams redly in the desert by  
the 'soak'—

But says one mate to the other, 'Brace your lip and  
do not fret,

'We will laugh on trams and 'buses—Sydney's in the  
same place yet.'

Working in the South in winter, to the waist in  
dripping fern,

Where the local spirit hungers for each 'saxpence'  
that we earn—

We can stand it for a season, for our world is  
growing wide,

And they all are friends and strangers who belong to  
Sydney-Side.

'T'other-siders ! 'T'other-siders !' Yet we wake the  
dusty dead ;

It is we that send the backward province fifty years  
ahead ;

We it is that 'trim' Australia—making narrow  
country wide—

Yet we're always 'T'other-siders till we sail for  
Sydney-side.

## THE ROVERS

SOME born of homely parents  
For ages settled down—  
The steady generations  
Of village, farm, and town :  
And some of dusky fathers  
Who wandered since the flood—  
The fairest skin or darkest  
Might hold the roving blood—

Some born of brutish peasants,  
And some of dainty peers,  
In poverty or plenty  
They pass their early years ;  
But, born in pride of purple,  
Or straw and squalid sin,  
In all the far world corners  
The wanderers are kin.



## THE ROVERS

A rover or a rebel,  
Conceived and born to roam,  
As babies they will toddle  
With faces turned from home ;  
They've fought beyond the vanguard  
Wherever storm has raged,  
And home is but a prison  
They pace like lions caged.

They smile and are not happy ;  
They sing and are not gay ;  
They weary, yet they wander ;  
They love, and cannot stay ;  
They marry, and are single  
Who watch the roving star,  
For, by the family fireside,  
Oh, lonely men *they* are !

They die of peace and quiet—  
The deadly ease of life ;  
They die of home and comfort ;  
They *live* in storm and strife ;  
No poverty can tie them,  
Nor wealth nor place restrain—  
Girl, wife, or child might draw them,  
But they'll be gone again !

Across the glowing desert ;  
    Through naked trees and snow ;  
Across the rolling prairies  
    The skies have seen them go ;  
They fought to where the ocean  
    Receives the setting sun ;—  
But where shall fight the rovers  
    When all the lands are won ?

They thirst on Greenland snowfields,  
    On Never-Never sands ;  
Where man is not to conquer  
    They conquer barren lands ;  
They feel that most are cowards,  
    That all depends on ‘ nerve,’  
They lead who cannot follow,  
    They rule who cannot serve.

Across the plains and ranges,  
    Away across the seas,  
On blue and green horizons  
    They camp by twos and threes ;  
They hold on stormy borders  
    Of states that trouble earth  
The honour of the country  
    That only gave them birth.

Unlisted, uncommissioned,  
Untaught of any school,  
In far-away world corners  
Unconquered tribes they rule ;  
The lone hand and revolver—  
Sad eyes that never quail—  
The lone hand and the rifle  
That win where armies fail.

They slumber sound where murder  
And treachery are bare—  
The pluck of self-reliance,  
The pluck of past despair ;  
Thin brown men in pyjamas—  
The thin brown wiry men !—  
The helmet and revolver  
That lie beside the pen.

Through drought and desolation  
They won the way Out Back ;  
The commonplace and selfish  
Have followed on their track ;  
They conquer lands for others,  
For others find the gold,—  
But where shall go the rovers  
When all the lands are old ?

A rover and a rebel—  
And so the worlds commence !  
Their hearts shall beat as wildly  
Ten generations hence ;  
And when the world is crowded—  
'Tis signed and sealed by Fate—  
The roving blood will rise to make  
The countries desolate.

## FOREIGN LANDS

You may roam the wide seas over, follow, meet, and  
cross the sun,

Sail as far as ships can sail, and travel far as trains  
can run ;

You may ride and tramp wherever range or plain or  
sea expands,

But the crowd has been before you, and you'll not  
find ' Foreign Lands ;'

For the Early Days are over,

And no more the white-winged rover

Sinks the gale-worn coast of England bound for bays  
in Foreign Lands.

Foreign Lands are in the distance dim and dream-  
like, faint and far,

Long ago, and over yonder, where our boyhood  
fancies are,



For the land is by the railway cramped as though  
with iron bands,  
And the steamship and the cable did away with  
Foreign Lands.

Ah ! the days of blue and gold !

When the news was six months old—  
But the news was worth the telling in the days of  
Foreign Lands.

*Here we slave the dull years hopeless for the sake of Wool  
and Wheat—*

*Here the homes of ugly Commerce—niggard farm and  
haggard street ;*

*Yet our mothers and our fathers won the life the heart  
demands—*

*Less than fifty years gone over, we were born in Foreign  
Lands.*

When the gipsies stole the children still, in village  
tale and song,

And the world was wide to travel, and the roving  
spirit strong ;

When they dreamed of South Sea Islands, summer  
seas and coral strands—

Then the bravest hearts of England sailed away to  
Foreign Lands,  
    ‘ Fitting foreign ’—flood and field—  
    Half the world and orders sealed—  
And the first and best of Europe went to fight in  
Foreign Lands.

Canvas towers on the ocean—homeward bound and  
    outward bound—  
Glint of topsails over islands—splash of anchors in  
    the sound ;  
Then they landed in the forests, took their strong lives  
    in their hands,  
And they fought and toiled and conquered—making  
    homes in Foreign Lands,  
    Through the cold and through the drought—  
    Further on and further out—  
Winning half the world for England in the wilds of  
Foreign Lands.

Love and pride of life inspired them when the simple  
    village hearts  
Followed Master Will and Harry—gone abroad to  
    ‘ furrin parts ’—

By our townships and our cities, and across the desert  
sands

Are the graves of those who fought and died for us  
in Foreign Lands—

Gave their young lives for our sake

(Was it all a grand mistake?)

Sons of Master Will and Harry born abroad in  
Foreign Lands !

*Ah, my girl, our lives are narrow, and in sordid days  
like these,*

*I can hate the things that banished 'Foreign Lands  
across the seas,'*

*But with all the world before us, God above us—hearts  
and hands,*

*I can sail the seas in fancy far away to Foreign Lands.*

## MARY LEMAINÉ

JIM DUFF was a 'native,' as wild as could be ;  
A stealer and duffer of cattle was he,  
But back in his youth he had stolen a pearl—  
Or a diamond rather—the heart of a girl ;  
She served with a squatter who lived on the plain,  
And the name of the girl it was Mary Lemaine.

'Twas a drear, rainy day and the twilight was done,  
When four mounted troopers rode up to the run.  
They spoke to the squatter—he asked them all in.  
The homestead was small and the walls they were thin ;  
And in the next room, with a cold in her head,  
Our Mary was sewing on buttons—in bed.

She heard a few words, but those words were  
enough—

The troopers were all on the track of Jim Duff.

The super, his rival, was planning a trap  
To capture the scamp in Maginnis's Gap.  
'I've warned him before, and I'll do it again ;—  
'I'll save him to-night,' whispered Mary Lemaine.

No petticoat job—there was no time to waste,  
The suit she was mending she slipped on in haste,  
And five minutes later they gathered in force,  
But Mary was off, on the squatter's best horse ;  
With your hand on your heart, just to deaden the  
    pain,  
Ride hard to the ranges, brave Mary Lemaine !

She rode by the ridges all sullen and strange,  
And far up long gullies that ran through the range,  
Till the rain cleared away, and the tears in her eyes  
Caught the beams of the moon from Maginnis's Rise.  
A fire in the depths of the gums she espied—  
'Who's there ?' shouted Jim. 'It is Mary !' she cried.

Next morning the sun rose in splendour again,  
And two loving sinners rode out on the plain ;  
And baffled, and angry, and hungry and damp,  
The four mounted troopers rode back to the camp.  
But they hushed up the business—the reason is plain,  
They all had been 'soft' on fair Mary Lemaine.

The squatter got back all he lost from his mob,  
And old Sergeant Kennedy winked at the job ;  
Jim Duff keeps a shanty far out in the west,  
And the sundowners call it the ' Bushranger's Rest.'  
But the bushranger lives a respectable life,  
And the law never troubles Jim Duff or his wife.



## THE SHAKEDOWN ON THE FLOOR

SET me back for twenty summers—

For I'm tired of cities now—

Set my feet in red-soil furrows

And my hands upon the plough,

With the two 'Black Brothers' trudging

On the home stretch through the loam—

While, along the grassy siding,

Come the cattle grazing home.

And I finish ploughing early,

And I hurry home to tea—

There's my black suit on the stretcher,

And a clean white shirt for me ;

There's a dance at Rocky Rises,

And, when all the fun is o'er,

For a certain favoured party

There's a shake-down on the floor.

You remember Mary Carey,  
    Bushmen's favourite at the Rise?  
With her sweet small freckled features,  
    Red-gold hair, and kind grey eyes ;  
Sister, daughter, to her mother,  
    Mother, sister, to the rest—  
And of all my friends and kindred,  
    Mary Carey loved me best.

Far too shy, because she loved me,  
    To be dancing oft with me ;  
What cared I, because she loved me,  
    If the world were there to see?  
But we lingered by the slip rails  
    While the rest were riding home,  
Ere the hour before the dawning,  
    Dimmed the great star-clustered dome.

Small brown hands that spread the mattress  
    While the old folk winked to see  
How she'd find an extra pillow  
    And an extra sheet for me.  
For a moment shyly smiling,  
    She would grant me one kiss more—  
Slip away and leave me happy  
    By the shake-down on the floor.

Rock me hard in steerage cabins,

Rock me soft in wide saloons,

Lay me on the sand-hill lonely

Under waning western moons ;

But wherever night may find me

Till I rest for evermore—

I will dream that I am happy

On the shake-down on the floor.

Ah ! she often watched at sunset—

For her people told me so—

Where I left her at the slip-rails

More than fifteen years ago.

And she faded like a flower,

And she died, as such girls do,

While, away in Northern Queensland,

Working hard, I never knew.

And we suffer for our sorrows,

And we suffer for our joys,

From the old bush days when mother

Spread the shake-down for the boys.

But to cool the living fever,

Comes a cold breath to my brow,

And I feel that Mary's spirit

Is beside me, even now.

## REEDY RIVER

TEN miles down Reedy River  
A pool of water lies,  
And all the year it mirrors  
The changes in the skies,  
And in that pool's broad bosom  
Is room for all the stars ;  
Its bed of sand has drifted  
O'er countless rocky bars.

Around the lower edges  
There waves a bed of reeds,  
Where water rats are hidden  
And where the wild duck breeds ;  
And grassy slopes rise gently  
To ridges long and low,  
Where groves of wattle flourish  
And native bluebells grow.

Beneath the granite ridges  
 The eye may just discern  
 Where Rocky Creek emerges  
 From deep green banks of fern ;  
 And standing tall between them,  
 The grassy sheoaks cool  
 The hard, blue-tinted waters  
 Before they reach the pool.

Ten miles down Reedy River  
 One Sunday afternoon,  
 I rode with Mary Campbell  
 To that broad bright lagoon ;  
 We left our horses grazing  
 Till shadows climbed the peak,  
 And strolled beneath the sheoaks  
 On the banks of Rocky Creek.

Then home along the river  
 That night we rode a race,  
 And the moonlight lent a glory  
 To Mary Campbell's face ;  
 And I pleaded for my future  
 All thro' that moonlight ride,  
 Until our weary horses  
 Drew closer side by side.

## REEDY RIVER

Ten miles from Ryan's crossing  
And five below the peak,  
I built a little homestead  
On the banks of Rocky Creek ;  
I cleared the land and fenced it  
And ploughed the rich red loam,  
And my first crop was golden  
When I brought Mary home.

Now still down Reedy River  
The grassy sheoaks sigh,  
And the waterholes still mirror  
The pictures in the sky ;  
And over all for ever  
Go sun and moon and stars,  
While the golden sand is drifting  
Across the rocky bars ;

But of the hut I builded  
There are no traces now.  
And many rains have levelled  
The furrows of the plough ;  
And my bright days are olden,  
For the twisted branches wave  
And the wattle blossoms golden  
On the hill by Mary's grave.

## OLD STONE CHIMNEY

THE rising moon on the peaks was blending  
Her silver light with the sunset glow,  
When a swagman came as the day was ending  
Along a path that he seemed to know.  
But all the fences were gone or going—  
The hand of ruin was everywhere ;  
The creek unchecked in its course was flowing,  
For none of the old clay dam was there.

Here Time had been with his swiftest changes,  
And husbandry had westward flown ;  
The cattle tracks in the rugged ranges  
Were long ago with the scrub o'ergrown.  
It must have needed long years to soften  
The road, that as hard as rock had been ;  
The mountain path he had trod so often  
Lay hidden now with a carpet green.



He thought at times from the mountain courses  
He heard the sound of a bullock bell,  
The distant gallop of stockmen's horses,  
The stockwhip's crack that he knew so well :  
But these were sounds of his memory only,  
And they were gone from the flat and hill,  
For when he listened the place was lonely,  
The range was dumb and the bush was still.

The swagman paused by the gap and faltered,  
For down the gully he feared to go,  
The scene in memory never altered—  
The scene before him had altered so.  
But hope is strong, and his heart grew bolder,  
And over his sorrows he raised his head,  
He turned his swag to the other shoulder,  
And plodded on with a firmer tread.

Ah, hope is always the keenest hearer,  
And fancies much when assailed by fear ;  
The swagman thought, as the farm drew nearer,  
He heard the sounds that he used to hear.  
His weary heart for a moment bounded,  
For a moment brief he forgot his dread ;  
For plainly still in his memory sounded  
The welcome bark of a dog long dead.

A few steps more and his face grew ghostly,  
 Then white as death in the twilight grey ;  
 Deserted wholly, and ruined mostly,  
 The Old Selection before him lay.  
 Like startled spectres that paused and listened,  
 The few white posts of the stockyard stood ;  
 And seemed to move as the moonlight glistened  
 And paled again on the whitened wood.

And thus he came, from a life long banished  
 To other lands, and of peace bereft,  
 To find the farm and the homestead vanished,  
 And only the old stone chimney left.  
 The field his father had cleared and gardened  
 Was overgrown with saplings now ;  
 The rain had set and the drought had hardened  
 The furrows made by a vanished plough.

And this, and this was the longed-for haven  
 Where he might rest from a life of woe ;  
 He read a name on the mantel graven—  
 The name was his ere he stained it so.  
 ‘And so remorse on my care encroaches—  
 ‘I have not suffered enough,’ he said ;  
 ‘That name is pregnant with deep reproaches—  
 ‘The past won’t bury dishonoured dead !’

Ah, now he knew it was long years after,  
And felt how swiftly a long year speeds ;  
The hardwood post and the beam and rafter  
Had rotted long in the tangled weeds.  
He found that time had for years been sowing  
The coarse wild scrub on the homestead path,  
And saw young trees by the chimney growing,  
And mountain ferns on the wide stone hearth.

He wildly thought of the evil courses  
That brought disgrace on his father's name ;  
The escort robbed, and the stolen horses,  
The felon's dock with its lasting shame.  
' Ah, God ! Ah, God ! is there then no pardon ?'  
He cried in a voice that was strained and hoarse ;  
He fell on the weeds that were once a garden,  
And sobbed aloud in his great remorse.

But grief must end, and his heart ceased aching  
When pitying sleep to his eye-lids crept,  
And home and friends who were lost in waking,  
They all came back while the stockman slept.  
And when he woke on the empty morrow,  
The pain at his heart was a deadened pain ;  
And bravely bearing his load of sorrow,  
He wandered back to the world again.

## SONG OF THE OLD BULLOCK-DRIVER

FAR back in the days when the blacks used to ramble

In long single file 'neath the evergreen tree,

The wool-teams in season came down from Coonamble,

And journeyed for weeks on their way to the sea.

'Twas then that our hearts and our sinews were  
stronger,

For those were the days when the bushman was  
bred.

We journeyed on roads that were rougher and longer

Than roads where the feet of our grandchildren  
tread.

With mates who have gone to the great Never-  
Never,

And mates whom I've not seen for many a day,

I camped on the banks of the Cudgegong River

And yarned at the fire by the old bullock-dray.

36      SONG OF THE OLD BULLOCK-DRIVER

I would summon them back from the far Riverina,  
    From days that shall be from all others distinct,  
And sing to the sound of an old concertina  
    Their rugged old songs where strange fancies were  
        linked.

We never were lonely, for, camping together,  
    We yarned and we smoked the long evenings away,  
And little I cared for the signs of the weather  
    When snug in my hammock slung under the dray.  
We rose with the dawn, were it ever so chilly,  
    When yokes and tarpaulins were covered with  
        frost,  
And toasted the bacon and boiled the black billy,  
    Where high on the camp-fire the branches were  
        tossed.

On flats where the air was suggestive of 'possums,  
    And homesteads and fences were hinting of change,  
We saw the faint glimmer of appletree blossoms,  
    And far in the distance the blue of the range ;  
And here in the rain, there was small use in flogging  
    The poor, tortured bullocks that tugged at the  
        load,  
When down to the axles the waggon were bogging  
    And traffic was making a marsh of the road.

'Twas hard on the beasts on the terrible pinches,  
Where two teams of bullocks were yoked to a load,  
And tugging and slipping, and moving by inches,  
Half-way to the summit they clung to the road.  
And then, when the last of the pinches was bested,  
(You'll surely not say that a glass was a sin ?)  
The bullocks lay down 'neath the gum trees and  
rested—  
The bullockies steered for the bar of the inn.

Then slowly we crawled by the trees that kept tally  
Of miles that were passed on the long journey  
down.

We saw the wild beauty of Capertee Valley,  
As slowly we rounded the base of the Crown.  
But, ah ! the poor bullocks were cruelly goaded  
While climbing the hills from the flats and the  
vales ;

'Twas here that the teams were so often unloaded  
That all knew the meaning of ' counting your bales.'

And, oh ! but the best-paying load that I carried  
Was one to the run where my sweetheart was  
nurse.

We courted awhile, and agreed to get married,  
And couple our futures for better or worse.

And as my old feet grew too weary to drag on  
    The miles of rough metal they met by the way,  
My eldest grew up and I gave him the waggon—  
    He's plodding along by the bullocks to-day.



## THE LIGHTS OF COBB AND CO.

FIRE LIGHTED, on the table a meal for sleepy men,  
A lantern in the stable, a jingle now and then ;  
The mail coach looming darkly by light of moon  
and star,  
The growl of sleepy voices—a candle in the bar ;  
A stumble in the passage of folk with wits abroad ;  
A swear-word from a bedroom—the shout of ‘All  
aboard !’  
‘Tchk-tchk ! Git-up !’ ‘Hold fast, there !’ and  
down the range we go ;  
Five hundred miles of scattered camps will watch for  
Cobb and Co.

Old coaching towns already ‘decaying for their sins,’  
Uncounted ‘Half-Way Houses,’ and scores of ‘Ten  
Mile Inns ;’  
The riders from the stations by lonely granite peaks ;

The black-boy for the shepherds on sheep and cattle  
creeks ;

The roaring camps of Gulgong, and many a ' Digger's  
Rest ;'

The diggers on the Lachlan ; the huts of Furthest  
West ;

Some twenty thousand exiles who sailed for weal or  
woe ;

The bravest hearts of twenty lands will wait for Cobb  
and Co.

The morning star has vanished, the frost and fog are  
gone,

In one of those grand mornings which but on moun-  
tains dawn ;

A flask of friendly whisky—each other's hopes we  
share—

And throw our top-coats open to drink the mountain  
air.

The roads are rare to travel, and life seems all com-  
plete ;

The grind of wheels on gravel, the trot of horses' feet,

The trot, trot, trot and canter, as down the spur we go—

The green sweeps to horizons blue that call for Cobb  
and Co.

We take a bright girl actress through western dust  
and damps,

To bear the home-world message, and sing for sinful  
camps,

To wake the hearts and break them, wild hearts that  
hope and ache—

(Ah! when she thinks of *those* days her own must  
nearly break!)

Five miles this side the gold-field, a loud, triumphant  
shout:

Five hundred cheering diggers have snatched the  
horses out:

With 'Auld Lang Syne' in chorus through roaring  
camps they go—

That cheer for her, and cheer for Home, and cheer  
for Cobb and Co.

Three lamps above the ridges and gorges dark and  
deep,

A flash on sandstone cuttings where sheer the sidings  
sweep,

A flash on shrouded waggons, on water ghastly  
white;

Weird bush and scattered remnants of 'rushes in  
the night;'

Across the swollen river a flash beyond the ford :

‘ Ride hard to warn the driver ! He’s drunk or mad,  
good Lord ! ’

But on the bank to westward a broad, triumphant  
glow—

A hundred miles shall see to-night the lights of Cobb  
and Co. !

Swift scramble up the siding where teams climb inch  
by inch ;

Pause, bird-like, on the summit—then breakneck  
down the pinch

Past haunted half-way houses—where convicts made  
the bricks—

Scrub-yards and new bark shanties, we dash with five  
and six—

By clear, ridge-country rivers, and gaps where tracks  
run high,

Where waits the lonely horseman, cut clear against  
the sky ;

Through stringy-bark and blue-gum, and box and  
pine we go ;

New camps are stretching ’cross the plains the routes  
of Cobb and Co.

. . . . .

Throw down the reins, old driver—there's no one left  
to shout ;

The ruined inn's survivor must take the horses out.  
A poor old coach hereafter!—we're lost to all such  
things—

No bursts of songs or laughter shall shake your  
leathern springs

When creeping in unnoticed by railway sidings  
drear,

Or left in yards for lumber, decaying with the year—  
Oh, who'll think how in those days when distant  
fields were broad

You raced across the Lachlan side with twenty-five  
on board.

Not all the ships that sail away since Roaring Days  
are done—

Not all the boats that steam from port, nor all the  
trains that run,

Shall take such hopes and loyal hearts—for men shall  
never know

Such days as when the Royal Mail was run by Cobb  
and Co.

The 'greyhounds' race across the sea, the 'special'  
cleaves the haze,

But these seem dull and slow to me compared with  
Roaring Days !

The eyes that watched are dim with age, and souls  
are weak and slow,

The hearts are dust or hardened now that broke for  
Cobb and Co.

## HOW THE LAND WAS WON

THE future was dark and the past was dead  
As they gazed on the sea once more—  
But a nation was born when the immigrants said  
‘ Good-bye ! ’ as they stepped ashore !  
In their loneliness they were parted thus  
Because of the work to do,  
A wild wide land to be won for us  
By hearts and hands so few.

The darkest land 'neath a blue sky's dome,  
And the widest waste on earth ;  
The strangest scenes and the least like home  
In the lands of our fathers' birth ;  
The loneliest land in the wide world then,  
And away on the furthest seas,  
A land most barren of life for men—  
And they won it by twos and threes !



With God, or a dog, to watch, they slept  
By the camp-fires' ghastly glow,  
Where the scrubs were dark as the blacks that crept  
With 'nulla' and spear held low ;  
Death was hidden amongst the trees,  
And bare on the glaring sand  
They fought and perished by twos and threes—  
And that's how they won the land !

It was two that failed by the dry creek bed,  
While one reeled on alone—  
The dust of Australia's greatest dead  
With the dust of the desert blown !  
Gaunt cheek-bones cracking the parchment skin  
That scorched in the blazing sun,  
Black lips that broke in a ghastly grin—  
And that's how the land was won !

Starvation and toil on the tracks they went,  
And death by the lonely way ;  
The childbirth under the tilt or tent,  
The childbirth under the dray !  
The childbirth out in the desolate hut  
With a half-wild gin for nurse—  
That's how the first were born to bear  
The brunt of the first man's curse !

They toiled and they fought through the shame of it—

Through wilderness, flood, and drought ;

They worked, in the struggles of early days,

Their sons' salvation out.

The white girl-wife in the hut alone,

The men on the boundless run,

The miseries suffered, unvoiced, unknown—

And that's how the land was won.

No armchair rest for the old folk then—

But, ruined by blight and drought,

They blazed the tracks to the camps again

In the big scrubs further out.

The worn haft, wet with a father's sweat,

Gripped hard by the eldest son,

The boy's back formed to the hump of toil —

And that's how the land was won !

And beyond Up Country, beyond Out Back,

And the rainless belt, they ride,

The currency lad and the ne'er-do-weel

And the black sheep, side by side ;

In wheeling horizons of endless haze

That disk through the Great North-west,

They ride for ever by twos and by threes—

And that's how they win the rest.

## THE BOSS OVER THE BOARD

WHEN he's over a rough and unpopular shed,  
With the sins of the bank and the men on his head ;  
When he musn't look black or indulge in a grin,  
And thirty or forty men hate him like Sin—  
I am moved to admit—when the total is scored—  
That it's just a bit off for the Boss-of-the-board.

I have battled a lot,  
But my dream's never soared  
To the lonely position of Boss-of-the-board.

'Twas a black-listed shed down the Darling : the  
Boss  
Was a small man to see—though a big man to  
cross—  
We had nought to complain of—except what we  
thought,  
And the Boss didn't boss any more than he ought ;

But the Union was booming, and Brotherhood soared,  
So we hated like poison the Boss-of-the-board.

We could tolerate 'hands'—

We respected the cook ;

But the name of a Boss was a blot in our book.

He'd a row with Big Duggan—a rough sort of  
Jim—

Or, rather, Jim Duggan was 'laying for' him !

His hate of Injustice and Greed was so deep

That his shearing grew rough—and he ill-used the  
sheep.

And I fancied that Duggan his manliness lower'd

When he took off his shirt to the Boss-of-the-board,

For the Boss was ten stone,

And the shearer full-grown,

And he might have, they said, let the crawler  
alone.

Though some of us there wished the fight to the  
strong,

Yet we knew in our hearts that the shearer was  
wrong.

And the crawler was plucky, it can't be denied,

For he had to fight Freedom and Justice beside,

But he came up so gamely, as often as floored,  
That a blackleg stood up for the Boss-of-the-board !

And the fight was a sight,

And we pondered that night—

‘It’s surprising how some of those blacklegs can  
fight !’

Next day at the office, when sadly the wreck  
Of Jim Duggan came up like a lamb for his cheque,  
Said the Boss, ‘ Don’t be childish ! It’s all past and  
gone ;

‘ I am short of good shearers. You’d *better* stay on.’  
And we fancied Jim Duggan *our* dignity lower’d  
When he stopped to oblige a damned Boss-of-the-  
board.

We said nothing to Jim,

For a joke might be grim,

And the subject, we saw, was distasteful to him.

The Boss just went on as he’d done from the first,  
And he favoured Big Duggan no more than the  
worst ;

And when we’d cut out and the steamer came  
down—

With the hawkers and spielers—to take us to town,

And we'd all got aboard, 'twas Jim Duggan, good  
Lord !

Who yelled for three cheers for the Boss-of-the-board.

'Twas a bit off, no doubt—

And with Freedom about—

But a lot is forgot when a shed is cut out.

With Freedom of Contract maintained in his shed,  
And the curse of the Children of Light on his head,  
He's apt to long sadly for sweetheart or wife,  
And his views be inclined to the dark side of life.  
The Truth must be spread and the Cause must be  
shored—

But it's just a bit rough on the Boss-of-the-board.

I am all for the Right,

But perhaps (out of sight)

As a son or a husband or father he's white.

## WHEN THE LADIES COME TO THE SHEARING SHED

‘THE ladies are coming,’ the super says  
To the shearers sweltering there,  
And ‘the ladies’ means in the shearing shed :  
‘Don’t cut ’em too bad. Don’t swear.’  
The ghost of a pause in the shed’s rough heart,  
And lower is bowed each head ;  
And nothing is heard, save a whispered word,  
And the roar of the shearing-shed.

The tall, shy rouser has lost his wits,  
And his limbs are all astray ;  
He leaves a fleece on the shearing-board,  
And his broom in the shearer’s way.  
There’s a curse in store for that jackaroo  
As down by the wall he slants—  
And the ringer bends with his legs askew  
And wishes he’d ‘patched them pants.’



They are girls from the city. (Our hearts rebel  
As we squint at their dainty feet.)

And they gush and say in a girly way

That 'the dear little lambs' are 'sweet.'

And Bill, the ringer, who'd scorn the use

Of a childish word like 'damn,'

Would give a pound that his tongue were loose

As he tackles a lively lamb.

Swift thoughts of homes in the coastal towns—

Or rivers and waving grass—

And a weight on our hearts that we cannot define

That comes as the ladies pass.

But the rouser ventures a nervous dig

In the ribs of the next to him ;

And Barcoo says to his pen-mate : ' Twig

'The style of the last un, Jim.'

Jim Moonlight gives her a careless glance—

Then he catches his breath with pain—

His strong hand shakes and the sunlights dance

As he bends to his work again.

But he's well disguised in a bristling beard,

Bronzed skin, and his shearers' dress ;

And whatever Jim Moonlight hoped or feared

Were hard for his mates to guess.

Jim Moonlight, wiping his broad, white brow,  
Explains, with a doleful smile :  
'A stitch in the side,' and 'he's all right now'—  
But he leans on the beam awhile,  
And gazes out in the blazing noon  
On the clearing, brown and bare—  
She has come and gone, like a breath of June,  
In December's heat and glare.

The bushmen are big rough boys at the best,  
With hearts of a larger growth ;  
But they hide those hearts with a brutal jest,  
And the pain with a reckless oath.  
Though the Bills and Jims of the bush-bard sing  
Of their life loves, lost or dead,  
The love of a girl is a sacred thing  
Not voiced in a shearing-shed.

## THE BALLAD OF THE ROUSEABOUT

A ROUSEABOUT of rouseabouts, from any land—or  
none—

I bear a nick-name of the bush, and I'm—a woman's  
son ;

I came from where I camp'd last night, and, at the  
day-dawn glow,

I rub the darkness from my eyes, roll up my swag,  
and go.

Some take the track for bitter pride, some for no  
pride at all—

(But—to us all the world is wide when driven  
to the wall)

Some take the track for gain in life, some take the  
track for loss—

And some of us take up the swag as Christ took up  
the Cross.

Some take the track for faith in men—some take the  
track for doubt—

Some flee a squalid home to work their own salvation  
out.

Some dared not see a mother's tears nor meet a  
father's face—

Born of good Christian families some leap, head-long,  
from Grace.

Oh we are men who fought and rose, or fell from  
many grades ;

Some born to lie, and some to pray, we're men of  
many trades ;

We're men whose fathers were and are of high and  
low degree—

The sea was open to us and we sailed across the  
sea.

And—were our quarrels wrong or just?—has no  
place in my song—

We seared our souls in puzzling as to what was right  
or wrong ;

We judge not and we are not judged—'tis our  
philosophy—

There's something wrong with every ship that sails  
upon the sea.

From shearing shed to shearing shed we tramp to  
make a cheque—

Jack Cornstalk and the ne'er-do-weel—the tar-boy  
and the wreck.

We learn the worth of man to man—and this we  
learn too well—

The shanty and the shearing shed are warmer spots  
in hell !

I've humped my swag to Bawley Plain, and further  
out and on ;

I've boiled my billy by the Gulf, and boiled it by the  
Swan—

I've thirsted in dry lignum swamps, and thirsted on  
the sand,

And eked the fire with camel dung in Never-Never  
Land.

I know the track from Spencer's Gulf and north of  
Cooper's Creek—

Where falls the half-caste to the strong, 'black velvet'  
to the weak—

(From gold-top Flossie in the Strand to half-caste and  
the gin—

If they had brains, poor animals ! we'd teach them  
how to sin.)

I've tramped, and camped, and 'shore' and drunk  
with many mates Out Back—

And every one to me is Jack because the first was  
Jack—

A 'lifer' sneaked from jail at home—the 'straightest'  
mate I met—

A 'ratty' Russian Nihilist—a British Baronet !

I know the tucker tracks that feed—or leave one in  
the lurch—

The 'Burgoo' (Presbyterian) track—the 'Murphy'  
(Roman Church)—

But more the *man*, and not the *track*, so much as it  
appears,

For 'battling' is a trade to learn, and I've served  
seven years.

We're haunted by the past at times—and this is very  
bad,

And so we drink till horrors come, lest, sober, we go  
mad—

So much is lost Out Back, so much of hell is  
realised—

A man might skin himself alive and no one be  
surprised.

A rouseabout of rouseabouts, above—beneath regard,  
I know how soft is this old world, and I have learnt  
how hard—

A rouseabout of rouseabouts—I know what men can  
feel,

I've seen the tears from hard eyes slip as drops from  
polished steel.

I learned what college had to teach, and in the school  
of men

By camp-fires I have learned, or, say, unlearned it all  
again ;

But this I've learned, that truth is strong, and if a  
man go straight

He'll live to see his enemy struck down by time and  
fate !

We hold him true who's true to one however false  
he be

(There's something wrong with every ship that lies  
beside the quay) ;

We lend and borrow, laugh and joke, and when the  
past is drowned,

We sit upon our swags and smoke and watch the  
world go round.

## YEARS AFTER THE WAR IN AUSTRALIA

THE big rough boys from the runs out back were first  
where the balls flew free,  
And yelled in the slang of the Outside Track : ‘ By  
God, it’s a Christmas spree ! ’  
‘ It’s not too rusty ’—and ‘ Wool away !—stand clear  
of the blazing shoots ! ’—  
‘ Sheep O ! Sheep O ! ’—‘ We’ll cut out to-day ’—  
‘ Look out for the boss’s boots ! ’—  
‘ What price the tally in camp to-night ! ’—‘ What  
price the boys Out Back ! ’—  
‘ Go it, you tigers, for Right or Might and the pride  
of the Outside Track ! ’—  
‘ Needle and thread ! ’—‘ I have broke my comb ! ’—  
‘ Now ride, you flour-bags, ride ! ’—  
‘ Fight for your mates and the folk at home ! ’—  
‘ Here’s for the Lachlan side ! ’



Those men of the West would sneer and scoff at the  
gates of hell ajar,  
And oft the sight of a head cut off was hailed by a  
yell for 'Tar !'

. . . . .

I heard the push in the Red Redoubt, irate at a  
luckless shot :

'Look out for the blooming shell, look out !'—'Gor'  
bli' me, but that's red-hot !'—

'It's Bill the Slogger—poor bloke—he's done. A  
chunk of the shell was his ;

'I wish the beggar that fired that gun could get  
within reach of Liz.'

'Those foreign gunners will give us rats, but I wish  
it was Bill they missed.'

'I'd like to get at their bleeding hats with a rock in  
my (something) fist.'

'Hold up, Billy ; I'll stick to you ; they've hit you  
under the belt ;

'If we get the waddle I'll swag you through, if the  
blazing mountains melt ;

'You remember the night when the traps got me for  
stoushing a bleeding Chow,

‘And you went for ’em proper and laid out three,  
and I won’t forget it now.’

And, groaning and swearing, the pug replied : ‘I’m  
done . . . they’ve knocked me out !

‘I’d fight them all for a pound a-side, from the boss  
to the rouseabout.

‘My nut is cracked and my legs is broke, and it gives  
me worse than hell ;

‘I trained for a scrap with a twelve-stone bloke, and  
not with a bursting shell.

‘You needn’t mag, for I knowed, old chum, I *knowed*,  
old pal, you’d stick ;

‘But you can’t hold out till the reg’lars come, and  
you’d best be nowhere quick.

‘They’ve got a force and a gun ashore, both of our  
wings is broke ;

‘They’ll storm the ridge in a minute more, and the  
best you can do is smoke.’

And Jim exclaimed : ‘You can smoke, you chaps,  
but me—Gor’ bli’ me, no !

‘The push that ran from the George-street traps  
won’t run from a foreign foe.

‘I’ll stick to the gun while she makes them sick, and  
I’ll stick to what’s left of Bill.’

And they hiss through their blackened teeth : ' We'll  
 stick ! by the blazing flame, we will !'  
 And long years after the war was past, they told in  
 the town and bush  
 How the ridge of death to the bloody last was held  
 by a Sydney push ;  
 How they fought to the end in a sheet of flame, how  
 they fought with their rifle-stocks,  
 And earned, in a nobler sense, the name of their  
 ancient weapons—' rocks.'

. . . . .

In the western camps it was ever our boast, when  
 'twas bad for the kangaroo :  
 ' If the enemy's forces take the coast, they must take  
 the mountains, too ;  
 ' They may force their way by the western line or  
 round by a northern track,  
 ' But they won't run short of a decent spree with the  
 men who are left out back !'  
 When we burst the enemy's ironclads and won by a  
 run of luck,  
 We whooped as loudly as Nelson's lads when a  
 French three-decker struck ;

And when the enemy's troops prevailed the truth  
was never heard—

We lied like heroes who never failed explaining how  
that occurred.

You bushmen sneer in the old bush way at the new-  
chum jackeroo,

But 'cuffs-'n'-collers' were out that day, and they  
stuck to their posts like glue ;

I never believed that a dude could fight till a Johnny  
led us then ;

We buried his bits in the rear that night for the  
honour of George-street men.

And Jim the Ringer—he fought, he did. The  
regiment nicknamed Jim,

'Old Heads a Caser' and 'Heads a Quid,' but it  
never was 'tails' with him.

The way that he rode was a racing rhyme, and the  
way that he finished grand ;

He backed the enemy every time, and died in a  
hand-to-hand !

. . . . .

I'll never forget when the ringer and I were first in  
the Bush Brigade,

With Warrego Bill, from the Live-till-you-Die, in the  
last grand charge we made.

And Billy died—he was full of sand—he said, as I raised his head :

‘I’m full of love for my native land, but a lot too full of lead.

‘Tell ’em,’ said Billy, ‘and tell old dad, to look after the cattle pup ;’

But his eyes grew bright, though his voice was sad, and he said, as I held him up :

‘I have been happy on western farms. And once, when I first went wrong,

‘Around my neck were the trembling arms of the girl I’d loved so long.

‘Far out on the southern seas I’ve sailed, and ridden where brumbies roam,

‘And oft, when all on the station failed, I’ve driven the outlaw home.

‘I’ve spent a cheque in a day and night, and I’ve made a cheque as quick ;

‘I struck a nugget when times were tight, and the stores had stopped our tick.

‘I’ve led the field on the old bay mare, and I hear the cheering still,

‘When mother and sister and *she* were there, and the old man yelled for Bill ;

66 YEARS AFTER THE WAR IN AUSTRALIA

‘But, save for *her*, could I live my while again in  
the old bush way,

‘I’d give it all for the last half-mile in the race we  
rode to-day!’

And he passed away as the stars came out—he died  
as old heroes die—

I heard the sound of the distant rout, and the  
Southern Cross was high.

## THE OLD JIMMY WOODSER

THE old Jimmy Woodser comes into the bar,  
Unwelcomed, unnoticed, unknown,  
Too old and too odd to be drunk with, by far ;  
And he glides to the end where the lunch baskets are  
And they say that he tipples alone.

His frock-coat is green and the nap is no more,  
And the style of his hat is at rest.  
He wears the peaked collar our grandfathers wore,  
The black-ribboned tie that was legal of yore,  
And the coat buttoned over his breast.

When first he came in, for a moment I thought  
That my vision or wits were astray ;  
For a picture and page out of Dickens he brought,  
'Twas an 'old file dropped in from the Chancery Court  
To a wine-vault just over the way.

But I dreamed as he tasted his bitters to-night,  
And the lights in the bar-room grew dim,  
That the shades of the friends of that other day's light,  
And of girls that were bright in our grandfathers'  
sight,  
Lifted shadowy glasses to him.

And I opened the door as the old man passed out,  
With his short, shuffling step and bowed head ;  
And I sighed, for I felt as I turned me about,  
An odd sense of respect—born of whisky no doubt—  
For the life that was fifty years dead.

And I thought—there are times when our memory  
trends

Through the future, as 'twere, on its own—  
That I, out of date ere my pilgrimage ends,  
In a new fashioned bar to dead loves and dead friends  
Might drink like the old man alone :  
While they whisper, ' He boozes alone.'



## THE CHRIST OF THE 'NEVER'

WITH eyes that seem shrunken to pierce  
To the awful horizons of land,  
Through the haze of hot days, and the fierce  
White heat-waves that flow on the sand ;  
Through the Never Land westward and nor'ward,  
Bronzed, bearded and gaunt on the track,  
Quiet-voiced and hard-knuckled, rides forward  
The Christ of the Outer Out-back.

For the cause that will ne'er be relinquished  
Spite of all the great cynics on earth—  
In the ranks of the bush undistinguished  
By manner or dress—if by birth—  
God's preacher, of churches unheeded—  
God's vineyard, though barren the sod—  
Plain spokesman where spokesman is needed—  
Rough link 'twixt the bushman and God.

He works where the hearts of all nations  
Are withered in flame from the sky,  
Where the sinners work out their salvations  
In a hell-upon-earth ere they die.  
In the camp or the lonely hut lying  
In a waste that seems out of God's sight,  
*He's* the doctor—the mate of the dying  
Through the smothering heat of the night.

By his work in the hells of the shearers,  
Where the drinking is ghastly and grim,  
Where the roughest and worst of his hearers  
Have listened bareheaded to him.  
By his paths through the parched desolation  
Hot rides and the terrible tramps ;  
By the hunger, the thirst, the privation  
Of his work in the furthestmost camps ;

By his worth in the light that shall search men  
And prove—ay ! and justify each—  
I place him in front of all churchmen  
Who feel not, who *know* not—but preach !

## THE CATTLE-DOG'S DEATH

THE plains lay bare on the homeward route,  
And the march was heavy on man and brute ;  
For the Spirit of Drouth was on all the land,  
And the white heat danced on the glowing sand.

The best of our cattle-dogs lagged at last,  
His strength gave out ere the plains were passed,  
And our hearts grew sad when he crept and laid  
His languid limbs in the nearest shade.

He saved our lives in the years gone by,  
When no one dreamed of the danger nigh,  
And the treacherous blacks in the darkness crept  
On the silent camp where the drovers slept.

'The dog is dying,' a stockman said,  
As he knelt and lifted the shaggy head ;  
'Tis a long day's march ere the run be near,  
'And he's dying fast ; shall we leave him here ?'

But the super cried, 'There's an answer there !'  
As he raised a tuft of the dog's grey hair ;  
And, strangely vivid, each man descried  
The old spear-mark on the shaggy hide.

We laid a 'bluey' and coat across  
The camping pack of the lightest horse,  
And raised the dog to his deathbed high,  
And brought him far 'neath the burning sky.

At the kindly touch of the stockmen rude  
His eyes grew human with gratitude ;  
And though we parched in the heat that fags,  
We gave him the last of the water-bags.

The super's daughter we knew would chide  
If we left the dog in the desert wide ;  
So we brought him far o'er the burning sand  
For a parting stroke of her small white hand.

But long ere the station was seen ahead,  
His pain was o'er, for the dog was dead ;  
And the folks all knew by our looks of gloom  
'Twas a comrade's corpse that we carried home.

## THE SONG OF THE DARLING RIVER

The only national work of the blacks was a dam or dyke of stones across the Darling River at Brewarrina. The stones they carried from Lord knows where—and the Lord knows how. The people of Bourke kept up navigation for months above the town by a dam of sand-bags. The Darling rises in blazing droughts from the Queensland rains. There are banks and beds of good clay and rock along the river.

THE skies are brass and the plains are bare,  
Death and ruin are everywhere—  
And all that is left of the last year's flood  
Is a sickly stream on the grey-black mud ;  
The salt-springs bubble and quagmires quiver,  
And—this is the dirge of the Darling River :

'I rise in the drought from the Queensland rain,  
'I fill my branches again and again ;  
'I hold my billabongs back in vain,  
'For my life and my peoples the South Seas drain ;  
'And the land grows old and the people never  
'Will see the worth of the Darling River.

‘ I drown dry gullies and lave bare hills,  
‘ I turn drought-ruts into rippling rills—  
‘ I form fair island and glades all green  
‘ Till every bend is a sylvan scene.  
‘ I have watered the barren land ten leagues wide !  
‘ But in vain I have tried, ah ! in vain I have tried  
‘ To show the sign of the Great All Giver,  
‘ The Word to a people : O ! lock your river.

‘ I want no blistering barge aground,  
‘ But racing steamers the seasons round ;  
‘ I want fair homes on my lonely ways,  
‘ A people’s love and a people’s praise—  
‘ And rosy children to dive and swim—  
‘ And fair girls’ feet in my rippling brim ;  
‘ And cool, green forests and gardens ever ’—  
Oh, this is the hymn of the Darling River.

*The sky is brass and the scrub-lands glare,  
Death and ruin are everywhere ;  
Thrown high to bleach, or deep in the mud  
The bones lie buried by last year’s flood.  
And the Demons dance from the Never Never  
To laugh at the rise of the Darling River.*

## RAIN IN THE MOUNTAINS

THE valley's full of misty cloud,  
Its tinted beauty drowning,  
The Eucalypti roar aloud,  
The mountain fronts are frowning.

The mist is hanging like a pall  
From many granite ledges,  
And many a little waterfall  
Starts o'er the valley's edges.

The sky is of a leaden grey,  
Save where the north is surly,  
The driven daylight speeds away,  
And night comes o'er us early.

But, love, the rain will pass full soon,  
Far sooner than my sorrow,  
And in a golden afternoon  
The sun may set to-morrow.

## A MAY NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAINS

'Tis a wonderful time when these hours begin,  
These long 'small hours' of night,  
When grass is crisp, and the air is thin,  
And the stars come close and bright.  
The moon hangs caught in a silvery veil,  
From clouds of a steely grey,  
And the hard, cold blue of the sky grows pale  
In the wonderful Milky Way.

There is something wrong with this star of ours,  
A mortal plank unsound,  
That cannot be charged to the mighty powers  
Who guide the stars around.  
Though man is higher than bird or beast,  
Though wisdom is still his boast,  
He surely resembles Nature least,  
And the things that vex her most.



Oh, say, some muse of a larger star,  
Some muse of the Universe,  
If they who people those planets far  
Are better than we, or worse?  
Are they exempted from deaths and births,  
And have they greater powers,  
And greater heavens, and greater earths,  
And greater Gods than ours?

Are our lies theirs, and our truth their truth,  
Are they cursed for pleasure's sake,  
Do they make their hells in their reckless youth  
Ere they know what hells they make?  
And do they toil through each weary hour  
Till the tedious day is o'er,  
For food that gives but the fleeting power  
To toil and strive for more?

## THE NEW CHUM JACKAROO

LET bushmen think as bushmen will,  
And say whate'er they choose,  
I hate to hear the stupid sneer  
At New Chum Jackaroos.

He may not ride as you can ride,  
Or do what you can do ;  
But sometimes you'd seem small beside  
The New Chum Jackaroo.

His share of work he never shirks,  
And through the blazing drought,  
He lives the old things down, and works  
His own salvation out.

When older, wiser chums despond  
He battles brave of heart—  
'Twas he who sailed of old beyond  
The margin of the chart.

'Twas he who proved the world was round—  
In crazy square canoes ;  
The lands you're living in were found  
By New Chum Jackaroos.

He crossed the deserts hot and bare,  
From barren, hungry shores—  
The plains that you would scarcely dare  
With all your tanks and bores.

He fought a way through stubborn hills  
Towards the setting sun—  
Your fathers all and Burke and Wills  
Were New Chums, every one.

When England fought with all the world  
In those brave days gone by,  
And all its strength against her hurled,  
He held her honour high.

By Southern palms and Northern pines—  
Where'er was life to lose—  
She held her own with thin red lines  
Of New Chum Jackaroos.

Through shot and shell and solitudes,  
Wherever feet have gone,  
The New Chums fought while eye-glass dudes  
And Johnnies led them on.

And though he wear a foppish coat,  
And these old things forget,  
In stormy times I'd give a vote  
For Cuffs and Collars yet.

## THE DONS OF SPAIN

THE Eagle screams at the beck of trade, so Spain, as  
the world goes round,  
Must wrestle the right to live or die from the sons of  
the land she found ;  
For, as in the days when the buccaneer was abroad  
on the Spanish Main,  
The national honour is one thing dear to the hearts  
of the Dons of Spain.

She has slaughtered thousands with fire and sword,  
as the Christian world might know ;  
We murder millions, but, thank the Lord ! we only  
starve 'em slow.  
The times have changed since the days of old, but  
the same old facts remain—  
We fight for Freedom, and God, and Gold, and the  
Spaniards fight for Spain.

We fought with the strength of the moral right, and  
they, as their ships went down,  
They only fought with the grit to fight and their  
armour to help 'em drown.  
It mattered little what chance or hope, for ever their  
path was plain,  
The Church was the Church, and the Pope the Pope  
—but the Spaniards fought for Spain.

If Providence struck for the honest thief at times in  
the battle's din—  
If ever it struck at the hypocrite—well, that's where  
the Turks came in ;  
But this remains ere we leave the wise to argue it  
through in vain—  
There's something great in the wrong that dies as the  
Spaniards die for Spain.

The foes of Spain may be kin to us who are English  
heart and soul,  
And proud of our national righteousness and proud  
of the lands we stole ;  
But we yet might pause while those brave men die  
and the death-drink pledge again —  
For the sake of the past, if you're doomed, say I,  
may your death be a grand one, Spain !

Then here's to the bravest of Freedom's foes who ever  
with death have stood—

For the sake of the courage to die on steel as their  
fathers died on wood ;

And here's a cheer for the flag unfurled in a hopeless  
cause again,

For the sake of the days when the Christian world  
was saved by the Dons of Spain.

## THE BURSTING OF THE BOOM

THE shipping-office clerks are 'short,' the manager is gruff—

'They cannot make reductions,' and 'the fares are low enough.'

They ship us West with cattle, and we go like cattle too ;

And fight like dogs three times a day for what we get to chew. . . .

We'll have the pick of empty bunks and lots of stretching room,

And go for next to nothing at the Bursting of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts !—we'll all get a show :

Then when the Boom bursts is our time to go.



We'll meet 'em coming back in shoals, with looks of  
deepest gloom,  
But we're the sort that battle through at the  
Bursting of the Boom.

The captain's easy-going when Fremantle comes in  
sight ;  
He can't say when you'll get ashore—'perhaps to-  
morrow night ;'  
Your coins are few ; the charges high ; you must not  
linger here—  
You'll get your boxes from the hold 'when she's  
'longside the pier.' . . .  
The launch will foul the gangway, and the trembling  
bulwarks loom  
Above a fleet of harbour craft—at the Bursting of  
the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts !—we'll all get a show ;  
He'll 'take you for a bob, sir,' and where you want  
to go.  
He'll 'take the big portmanteau, sir, if he might so  
presume'—  
You needn't hump your luggage at the Bursting of  
the Boom.

It's loafers—Customs-loafers—and you pay and pay  
again ;

They hinder you and cheat you from the gangway to  
the train ;

The pubs and restaurants are full— they haven't  
room for more ;

They charge us each three shillings for a shakedown  
on the floor ;

But, 'Show this gentleman upstairs—the first front  
parlour room.

'We'll see about your luggage, sir'—at the Bursting  
of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts !—we'll all get a show ;  
And wait till the Boom bursts, and swear mighty  
low.

'We mostly charge a pound a week. How do you  
like the room ?'

And 'Show this gentleman the bath'—at the Burst-  
ing of the Boom.

I go down to the timber-yard (I cannot face the  
rent)

To get some strips of oregon to frame my hessian  
tent ;

To buy some scraps of lumber for a table or a shelf :

The boss comes up and says I might just look round for myself ;

The foreman grunts and turns away as silent as the tomb—

The boss himself will wait on me at the Bursting of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts !—we'll all get a load.

‘ You had better take those scraps, sir, they're only in the road.’

‘ Now, where the hell's the carter ?’ you'll hear the foreman fume ;

And, ‘ Take that timber round at once !’ at the Bursting of the Boom.

Each one-a-penny grocer, in his box of board and tin,

Will think it condescending to consent to take you in ;

And not content with twice as much as what is just and right,

They charge and cheat you doubly, for the Boom is at its height.

It's 'Take it now or leave it now ;' 'your money or  
your room ;'—

But 'Who's attending Mr. Brown ?' at the Bursting  
of the Boom.

So wait till the Boom bursts !—and take what you  
can get,

'There's not the slightest hurry, and your bill ain't  
ready yet.'

They'll call and get your orders until the crack o'  
doom,

And send them round directly, at the Bursting of  
the Boom.

. . . . .

No Country and no Brotherhood—such things are  
dead and cold ;

A camp from all the lands or none, all mad for love  
of gold ;

Where T'othersider number one makes slave of  
number two,

And the vilest women of the world the vilest ways  
pursue ;

And men go out and slave and bake and die in  
agony

In western hells that God forgot, where never man  
should be.

I feel a prophet in my heart that speaks the one  
word 'Doom!'

And aye you'll hear the Devil laugh at the Bursting  
of the Boom.

## ANTONY VILLA

### *A Ballad of Ninety-three*

OVER there, above the jetty, stands the mansion of  
the Vardens,  
With a tennis ground and terrace, and a flagstaff in  
the gardens :  
They are gentlemen and ladies—they've been 'toffs'  
for generations,  
But old Varden's been unlucky—lost a lot in specu-  
lations.

Troubles gathered fast upon him when the mining  
bubble 'busted,'  
Then the bank suspended payment, where his little  
all he trusted ;  
And the butcher and the baker sent their bills in  
when they read it,  
Even John, the Chow that served him, has refused to  
give him 'cledit.'

And the daughters of the Vardens—they are beautiful  
as Graces—

But the balcony's deserted, and they rarely show  
their faces ;

And the swells of their acquaintance never seem to  
venture near them,

And the bailiff says they seldom have a cup of tea to  
cheer them.

They were butterflies—I always was a common  
caterpillar,

But I'm sorry for the ladies over there in 'Tony Villa,  
Shut up there in 'Tony Villa with the bailiff and  
their trouble ;

And the dried-up reservoir, where my tears were  
seems to bubble.

Mrs. Rooney thinks it nothing when she sends a brat  
to 'borry '

Just a pinch of tea and sugar till the grocer comes  
'temorry ;'

But it's dif'rent with the Vardens—they would starve  
to death as soon as

Knuckle down. You know, they weren't raised  
exactly like the Rooneys !

. . . . .

There is gossip in the 'boxes' and the drawing-rooms  
and gardens—

'Have you heard of Varden's failure? Have you  
heard about the Vardens?'

And no doubt each toney mother on the Point across  
the water's

Mighty glad about the downfall of the rivals of her  
daughters.

(Tho' the poets and the writers say that man to man's  
inhuman,

I'm inclined to think it's nothing to what woman is  
to woman,

More especially, the ladies, save perhaps a fellow's  
mother ;

And I think that men are better—they are kinder to  
each other.)

. . . . .  
There's a youngster by the jetty gathering cinders  
from the ashes,

He was known as 'Master Varden' ere the great  
financial crashes.

And his manner shows the difference 'twixt the nurs'ry  
and gutter —

But I've seen him at the grocer's buying half a pound  
of butter.



And his mother fights her trouble in the house across  
the water,

She is just as proud as Varden, though she was a  
'cocky's' daughter ;

And at times I think I see her with the flick'ring  
firelight o'er her,

Sitting pale and straight and quiet, gazing vacantly  
before her.

There's a slight and girlish figure—Varden's youngest  
daughter, Nettie—

On the terrace after sunset, when the boat is near  
the jetty ;

She is good and pure and pretty, and her rivals don't  
deny it,

Though they say that Nettie Varden takes in sewing  
on the quiet.

(How her sister graced the 'circle,' all unconscious of  
a lover

In the seedy 'god' who watched her from the gallery  
above her !

Shade of Poverty was on him, and the light of Wealth  
upon her,

But perhaps he loved her better than the swells  
attending on her.)

There's a white man's heart in Varden, spite of all  
the blue blood in him,

There are working men who wouldn't stand and hear  
a word agin' him ;

But his name was never printed by the side of his  
'donations,'

Save on hearts that have—in this world—very  
humble circulations.

He was never stiff or hoggish—he was affable and  
jolly,

And he'd always say 'Good morning' to the deck  
hand on the 'Polly ;'

He would 'barrack' with the newsboys on the Quay  
across the ferry,

And he'd very often tip 'em coming home a trifle  
merry.

But his chin is getting higher, and his features daily  
harden

(He will not 'give up possession'—there's a lot of  
fight in Varden) ;

And the way he steps the gangway ! oh, you couldn't  
but admire it !

Just as proud as ever hero walked the plank aboard  
a pirate !

He will think about the hardships that his girls were  
never 'useter,'

And it must be mighty heavy on the thoroughbred  
old rooster ;

But he'll never strike his colours, and I tell a  
lying tale if

Varden's pride don't kill him sooner than the bankers  
or the bailiff.

You remember when we often had to go without our  
dinners,

In the days when Pride and Hunger fought a finish  
out within us ;

And how Pride would come up groggy—Hunger  
whooping loud and louder—

And the swells are proud as we are ; they are just  
as proud—and prouder.

Yes, the toffs have grit, in spite of all our sneering  
and our scorning—

What's the crowd ? What's that ? God help us !—

Varden shot himself this morning ! . . . .

There'll be gossip in the 'circle,' in the drawing-  
rooms and gardens ;

But I'm sorry for the family ; yes—I'm sorry for the  
Vardens.

## SECOND CLASS WAIT HERE

ON suburban railway stations—you may see them as  
you pass—

There are signboards on the platforms saying, ‘Wait  
here second class ;’

And to me the whirr and thunder and the cluck of  
running gear

Seem to be for ever saying, saying ‘Second class wait  
here’—

‘Wait here second class,

‘Second class wait here.’

Seem to be for ever saying, saying ‘Second class  
wait here.’

And the second class were waiting in the days of  
serf and prince,

And the second class are waiting—they’ve been  
waiting ever since.

There are gardens in the background, and the line is  
bare and drear,

Yet they wait beneath a signboard, sneering 'Second  
class wait here.'

I have waited oft in winter, in the mornings dark  
and damp,

When the asphalt platform glistened underneath the  
lonely lamp.

Ghastly on the brick-faced cutting 'Sellum's Soap'  
and 'Blower's Beer ;'

Ghastly on enamelled signboards with their 'Second  
class wait here.

And the others seemed like burglars, slouched and  
muffled to the throats,

Standing round apart and silent in their shoddy  
overcoats,

And the wind among the wires, and the poplars  
bleak and bare,

Seemed to be for ever snarling, snarling 'Second class  
wait there.'

Out beyond the further suburb, 'neath a chimney  
stack alone,

Lay the works of Grinder Brothers, with a platform  
of their own ;

And I waited there and suffered, waited there for  
many a year,  
Slaved beneath a phantom signboard, telling our class  
to wait here.

Ah ! a man must feel revengeful for a boyhood such  
as mine.

God ! I hate the very houses near the workshop by  
the line ;

And the smell of railway stations, and the roar of  
running gear,

And the scornful-seeming signboards, saying 'Second  
class wait here.'

There's a train with Death for driver, which is ever  
going past,

And there are no class compartments, and we all  
must go at last

To the long white jasper platform with an Eden in  
the rear ;

And there won't be any signboards, saying 'Second  
class wait here.

## THE SHIPS THAT WON'T GO DOWN

WE hear a great commotion  
'Bout the ship that comes to grief,  
That founders in mid-ocean,  
Or is driven on a reef ;  
Because it's cheap and brittle  
A score of sinners drown.  
But we hear but mighty little  
Of the ships that won't go down.

Here's honour to the builders—  
The builders of the past ;  
Here's honour to the builders  
That builded ships to last ;  
Here's honour to the captain,  
And honour to the crew ;  
Here's double-column head-lines  
To the ships that battle through.

They make a great sensation  
About famous men that fail,  
That sink a world of chances  
In the city morgue or gaol,  
Who drink, or blow their brains out,  
Because of ' Fortune's frown.'  
But we hear far too little  
Of the men who won't go down.

The world is full of trouble,  
And the world is full of wrong,  
But the heart of man is noble,  
And the heart of man is strong !  
They say the sea sings dirges,  
But I would say to you  
That the wild wave's song's a pæan  
For the men that battle through.



## THE MEN WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN

WHEN God's wrath-cloud is o'er me,  
    Affrighting heart and mind ;  
When days seem dark before me,  
    And days seem black behind ;  
Those friends who think they know me—  
    Who deem their insight keen—  
They ne'er forget to show me  
    The man I might have been.

He's rich and independent,  
    Or rising fast to fame ;  
His bright star is ascendant,  
    The country knows his name ;  
His houses and his gardens  
    Are splendid to be seen ;  
His fault the wise world pardons—  
    The man I might have been.

His fame and fortune haunt me ;  
His virtues wave me back ;  
His name and prestige daunt me  
When I would take the track ;  
But you, my friend true-hearted—  
God keep our friendship green !—  
You know how I was parted  
From all I might have been.

But what avails the ache of  
Remorse or weak regret ?  
We'll battle for the sake of  
The men we might be yet !  
We'll strive to keep in sight of  
The brave, the true, and clean,  
And triumph yet in spite of  
The men we might have been.

## THE WAY OF THE WORLD

WHEN fairer faces turn from me,  
And gayer friends grow cold,  
And I have lost through poverty  
The friendship bought with gold ;  
When I have served the selfish turn  
Of some all-worldly few,  
And Folly's lamps have ceased to burn,  
Then I'll come back to you.

When my admirers find I'm not  
The rising star they thought,  
And praise or blame is all forgot  
My early promise brought ;  
When brighter rivals lead a host  
Where once I led a few,  
And kinder times reward their boast,  
Then I'll come back to you.

You loved me, not for what I had  
Or what I might have been.  
You saw the good, but not the bad,  
Was kind, for that between.  
I know that you'll forgive again—  
That you will judge me true;  
I'll be too tired to explain  
When I come back to you.

## THE BATTLING DAYS

So, sit you down in a straight-backed chair, with your  
pipe and your wife content,  
And cross your knees with your wisest air, and preach  
of the 'days mis-spent;'  
Grown fat and moral apace, old man ! you prate of  
the change 'since then'—  
In spite of all, I'd as lief be back in those hard old  
days again.

They were hard old days ; they were battling days ;  
they were cruel at itmes—but then,  
In spite of all, I would rather be back in those hard  
old days again.  
The land was barren to sow wild oats in the days  
when we sowed our own—  
(’Twas little we thought or our friends believed that  
ours would ever be sown)

But the wild oats wave on their stormy path, and  
they speak of the hearts of men—  
I would sow a crop if I had my time in those hard old  
days again.

We travel first, or we go saloon—on the planned-out  
trips we go,  
With those who are neither rich nor poor, and we  
find that the life is slow ;  
It's 'a pleasant trip' where they cried, 'Good luck !  
There was fun in the steerage then—  
In spite of all, I would fain be back in those vaga-  
bond days again.

On Saturday night we've a pound to spare—a pound  
for a trip down town—  
We took more joy in those hard old days for a hardly  
spared half-crown ;  
We took more pride in the pants we patched than  
the suits we have had since then—  
In spite of all, I would rather be back in those  
comical days again.

'Twas We and the World—and the rest go hang—as  
the Outside tracks we trod ;  
Each thought of himself as a man and mate, and not  
as a martyred god ;

The world goes wrong when your heart is strong—and  
this is the way with men—

The world goes right when your liver is white, and  
you preach of the change 'since then.'

They were hard old days ; they were battling days ;  
they were cruel times—but then,

In spite of all, we shall live to-night in those hard  
old days again.

## WRITTEN AFTERWARDS

So the days of my tramping are over,  
And the days of my riding are done—  
I'm about as content as a rover  
Will ever be under the sun ;  
I write, after reading your letter—  
My pipe with old memories rife—  
And I feel in a mood that had better  
Not meet the true eyes of the wife.

You must never admit a suggestion  
That old things are good to recall ;  
You must never consider the question :  
' Was I happier then, after all ?'  
You must banish the old hope and sorrow  
That make the sad pleasures of life,  
You must live for To-day and To-morrow  
If you want to be just to the wife.



I have changed since the first day I kissed her.

Which is due—Heaven bless her !—to her ;  
I'm respected and trusted—I'm ' Mister,'

Addressed by the children as ' Sir.'

And I feel the respect without feigning—

But you'd laugh the great laugh of your life  
If you only saw me entertaining  
An old lady friend of the wife.

By-the-way, when you're writing, remember

That you never went drinking with me,  
And forget our last night of December,  
Lest our sev'ral accounts disagree.  
And, for my sake, old man, you had better  
Avoid the old language of strife,  
For the technical terms of your letter  
May be misunderstood by the wife.

Never hint of the girls appertaining

To the past (when you're writing again),  
For they take such a lot of explaining,  
And you know how I hate to explain.  
There are some things, we know to our sorrow,  
That cut to the heart like a knife,  
And your past is To-day and To-morrow  
If you want to be true to the wife.

I believe that the creed we were chums in  
Was grand, but too abstract and bold,  
And the knowledge of life only comes in  
When you're married and fathered and old.  
And it's well. You may travel as few men,  
You may stick to a mistress for life ;  
But the world, as it is, born of woman  
Must be seen through the eyes of the wife.

No doubt you are dreaming as *I* did  
And going the careless old pace,  
While my future grows dull and decided,  
And the world narrows down to the Place.  
Let it be. If my 'treason's' resented,  
*You* may do worse, old man, in your life ;  
Let me dream, too, that I am contented—  
For the sake of a true little wife.

## THE UNCULTURED RHYMER TO HIS CULTURED CRITICS

FIGHT through ignorance, want, and care—

Through the griefs that crush the spirit ;

Push your way to a fortune fair,

And the smiles of the world you'll merit.

Long, as a boy, for the chance to learn—

For the chance that Fate denies you ;

Win degrees where the Life-lights burn,

And scores will teach and advise you.

My cultured friends ! you have come too late

With your bypath nicely graded ;

I've fought thus far on my track of Fate,

And I'll follow the rest unaided.

Must I be stopped by a college gate

On the track of Life encroaching ?

Be dumb to Love, and be dumb to Hate,

For the lack of a college coaching ?

You grope for Truth in a language dead—

In the dust 'neath tower and steeple !

What know you of the tracks we tread ?

And what know you of our people ?

' I must read this, and that, and the rest, '

And write as the cult expects me ?—

I'll read the book that may please me best,

And write as my heart directs me !

You were quick to pick on a faulty line

That I strove to put my soul in :

Your eyes were keen for a ' dash ' of mine

In the place of a semi-colon—

And blind to the rest. And is it for such

As you I must brook restriction ?

' I was taught too little ? ' I learnt too much

To care for a pedant's diction !

Must I turn aside from my destined way

For a task your Joss would find me ?

I come with strength of the living day,

And with half the world behind me ;

I leave you alone in your cultured halls

To drivel and croak and cavil :

Till your voice goes further than college walls,

Keep out of the tracks we travel !

## THE WRITER'S DREAM

A WRITER wrote of the hearts of men, and he  
followed their tracks afar ;

For his was a spirit that forced his pen to write of  
the things that are.

His heart grew tired of the truths he told, for his  
life was hard and grim ;

His land seemed barren, its people cold — yet the  
world was dear to him ;—

So he sailed away from the Streets of Strife, he  
travelled by land and sea,

In search of a people who lived a life as life in the  
world should be.

And he reached a spot where the scene was fair, with  
forest and field and wood,

And all things came with the seasons there, and each  
of its kind was good ;

There were mountain-rivers and peaks of snow, there  
were lights of green and gold,  
And echoing caves in the cliffs below, where a world-  
wide ocean rolled.

The lives of men from the wear of Change and the  
strife of the world were free—

For Steam was barred by the mountain-range and the  
rocks of the Open Sea.

And the last that were born of a noble race—when  
the page of the South was fair—

The last of the conquered dwelt in peace with the last  
of the victors there.

He saw their hearts with the author's eyes who had  
written their ancient lore,

And he saw their lives as he'd dreamed of such—ah!  
many a year before.

And 'I'll write a book of these simple folk ere I to  
the world return,

'And the cold who read shall be kind for these—and  
the wise who read shall learn.

'Never again in a song of mine shall a jarring note  
be heard :

'Never again shall a page or line be marred by a  
bitter word ;

‘But love and laughter and kindly hours will the  
book I’ll write recall,  
‘With chastening tears for the loss of one, and sighs  
for their sorrows all.  
‘Old eyes will light with a kindly smile, and the  
young eyes dance with glee—  
‘And the heart of the cynic will rest awhile for my  
simple folk and me.’

The lines ran on as he dipped his pen—ran true to his  
heart and ear—

Like the brighter pages of memory when every line  
is clear.

The pictures came and the pictures passed, like days  
of love and light—

He saw his chapters from first to last, and he thought  
it grand to write.

And the writer kissed his girlish wife, and he kissed  
her twice for pride :

‘’Tis a book of love, though a book of life ! and a  
book *you’ll* read !’ he cried.

He was blind at first to each senseless slight (for  
shabby and poor he came)

From local ‘Fashion’ and mortgaged pride that  
scarce could sign its name.

What dreamer would dream of such paltry pride in a  
scene so fresh and fair?

But the local spirit intensified—with its pitiful shams  
—was there;

There were cliques wherever two houses stood (no  
rest for a family ghost!)

They hated each other as women could—but they  
hated the stranger most.

The writer wrote by day and night and he cried in  
the face of Fate—

I'll cleave to my dream of life in spite of the cynical  
ghosts that wait.

'Tis the shyness born of their simple lives,' he said  
to the paltry pride—

(The homely tongues of the simple wives ne'er erred  
on the generous side)—

'They'll prove me true and they'll prove me kind ere  
the year of grace be passed,'

But the ignorant whisper of 'axe to grind!' went  
home to his heart at last.

The writer sat by his drift-wood fire three nights of  
the South-east gale,

His pen lay idle on pages vain, for his book was a  
fairy tale.



The world-wise lines of an elder age were plain on  
his aching brow,

As he sadly thought of each brighter page that would  
never be written now.

‘I’ll write no more!’ But he bowed his head, for  
his heart was in Dreamland yet—

‘The pages written I’ll burn,’ he said, ‘and the pages  
thought forget.’

But he heard the hymn of the Open Sea, and the  
old fierce anger burned,

And he wrenched his heart from its dreamland free  
as the fire of his youth returned :—

‘The weak man’s madness, the strong man’s scorn—  
the rebellious hate of youth

‘From a deeper love of the world are born! And  
the cynical ghost is Truth!’

And the writer rose with a strength anew wherein  
Doubt could have no part ;

‘I’ll write my book and it *shall* be true—the truth of  
a writer’s heart.

‘Ay! cover the wrong with a fairy tale—who never  
knew want or care—

‘A bright green scum on a stagnant pool that will  
reek the longer there.

- ‘ You may starve the writer and buy the pen—you  
may drive it with want and fear—  
‘ But the lines run false in the hearts of men—and  
false to the writer’s ear.  
‘ The bard’s a rebel and strife his part, and he’ll burst  
from his bonds anew,  
‘ Till all pens write from a single heart ! And so may  
the dream come true.  
‘ ’Tis ever the same in the paths of men where money  
and dress are all,  
‘ The crawler will bully whene’er he can, and the bully  
who can’t will crawl.  
‘ And this is the creed in the local hole, where the  
souls of the selfish rule ;  
‘ Borrow and cheat while the stranger’s green, then  
sneer at the simple fool.  
‘ Spit your spite at the men whom Fate has placed in  
the head-race first,  
‘ And hate till death, with a senseless hate, the man  
you have injured worst !  
‘ There are generous hearts in the grinding street, but  
the Hearts of the World go west ;  
‘ For the men who toil in the dust and heat of the  
barren lands are best !

- 'The stranger's hand to the stranger, yet—for a  
roving folk are mine—
- 'The stranger's store for the stranger set—and the  
camp-fire glow the sign !
- 'The generous hearts of the world, we find, thrive best  
on the barren sod,
- 'And the selfish thrive where Nature's kind (they'd  
bully or crawl to God !)
- 'I was born to write of the things that are ! and the  
strength was given to me ;
- 'I was born to strike at the things that mar the world  
as the world should be !
- 'By the dumb heart-hunger and dreams of youth, by  
the hungry tracks I've trod—
- 'I'll fight as a man for the sake of truth, nor pose as  
a martyred god.
- 'By the heart of " Bill " and the heart of " Jim," and  
the men that *their* hearts deem " white,"
- 'By the handgrips fierce, and the hard eyes dim with  
forbidden tears !—I'll write !
- 'I'll write untroubled by cultured fools, or the dense  
that fume and fret—
- 'For against the wisdom of all their schools I would  
stake mine instinct yet !

‘For the cynical strain in the writer’s song is the  
    *world*, not *he*, to blame,  
‘And I’ll write as I think, in the knowledge strong  
    that thousands think the same ;  
‘And the men who fight in the Dry Country grim  
    battles by day, by night,  
‘Will believe in me, and will stand by me, and will  
    say to the world, “He’s right !”’

## THE JOLLY DEAD MARCH

IF I ever be worthy or famous—

Which I'm sadly beginning to doubt—

When the angel whose place 'tis to name us

Shall say to my spirit, 'Pass out!'

I wish for no sniv'ling about me

(My work was the work of the land),

But I hope that my country will shout me

The price of a decent brass band.

Thump! thump! of the drum and 'Ta-ra-rit,'

Thump! thump! and the music—it's grand,

If only in dreams, or in spirit,

To ride or march after the band!

And myself and my mourners go straying,

And strolling and drifting along

With a band in the front of us playing

The tune of an old battle song!

I ask for no 'turn-out' to bear me ;  
I ask not for railings or slabs,  
And spare me ! my country—oh, spare me !  
The hearse and the long string of cabs !  
I ask not the baton or 'starts' of  
The bore with the musical ear,  
But the music that's blown from the hearts of  
The men who work hard and drink beer.

And let 'em strike up 'Annie Laurie,'  
And let them burst out with 'Lang Syne'—  
Twin voices of sadness and glory,  
That have ever been likings of mine.  
And give the French war-hymn deep-throated  
The Watch of the Germans between,  
And let the last mile be devoted  
To 'Britannia' and 'Wearing the Green.'

And if, in the end—more's the pity—  
There is fame more than money to spare—  
There's a van-man I know in the city  
Who'll convey me, right side up with care.  
True sons of Australia, and noble,  
Have gone from the long dusty way,

While the sole mourner fought down his trouble  
With his pipe on the shaft of the dray.  
But let them strike up 'Annie Laurie,' &c.

And my spirit will join the procession—  
Will pause, if it may, on the brink—  
Nor feel the least shade of depression  
When the mourners drop out for a drink;  
It may be a hot day in December,  
Or a cold day in June it may be,  
And the drink will but help them remember  
The good points the world missed in me.  
And help 'em to love 'Annie Laurie,'  
And help 'em to raise 'Auld Lang Syne,' &c.

'Unhook the West Port' for an orphan,  
An old digger chorus revive—  
If you don't hear a whoop from the coffin,  
I am *not* being buried alive.  
But I'll go with a spirit less bitter  
Than mine own on the earth may have been,  
And, perhaps, to save trouble, Saint Peter  
Will pass me, two comrades between.

And let them strike up 'Annie Laurie,'  
And let 'em burst out with 'Lang Syne,'  
Twin voices of sadness and glory  
That have ever been likings of mine.  
Let them swell the French war-hymn deep-throated  
(And I'll not buck at 'God Save the Queen'),  
But let the last mile be devoted  
To 'Britannia' and 'Wearing the Green.'

*Thump! thump! of the drums we inherit—*  
War-drums of my dreams! Oh it's grand,  
If only in fancy or spirit,  
To ride or march after a band!  
And we, the World-Battlers, go straying  
And loving and laughing along—  
With Hope in the lead of us playing  
The tune of a life-battle song!



## MY LITERARY FRIEND

ONCE I wrote a little poem which I thought was very  
fine,  
And I showed the printer's copy to a critic friend of  
mine,  
First he praised the thing a little, then he found a  
little fault ;  
'The ideas are good,' he muttered, 'but the rhythm  
seems to halt.'

So I straighten'd up the rhythm where he marked it  
with his pen,  
And I copied it and showed it to my clever friend  
again.  
'You've improved the metre greatly, but the rhymes  
are bad,' he said,  
As he read it slowly, scratching surplus wisdom from  
his head.

So I worked as he suggested (I believe in taking  
time),

And I burnt the 'midnight taper' while I  
straightened up the rhyme.

'It is better now,' he muttered, 'you go on and  
you'll succeed,

'It has got a ring about it—the ideas are what you  
need.'

So I worked for hours upon it (I go on when I  
commence),

And I kept in view the rhythm and the jingle and  
the sense,

And I copied it and took it to my solemn friend once  
more—

It reminded him of something he had somewhere  
read before.

. . . . .

Now the people say I'd never put such horrors into  
print

If I wasn't too conceited to accept a friendly hint,

And my dearest friends are certain that I'd profit in  
the end

If I'd always show my copy to a literary friend.

## MARY CALLED HIM 'MISTER'

THEY'D parted but a year before—she never thought  
he'd come,

She stammer'd, blushed, held out her hand, and called  
him '*Mister Gum.*'

How could he know that all the while she longed to  
murmur '*John.*'

He called her '*Miss le Brook,*' and asked how she was  
getting on.

They'd parted but a year before ; they'd loved each  
other well,

But he'd been to the city, and he came back *such a*  
*swell.*

They longed to meet in fond embrace, they hungered  
for a kiss—

But Mary called him '*Mister,*' and the idiot called  
her '*Miss.*'

He stood and lean'd against the door—a stupid chap  
was he—

And, when she asked if he'd come in and have a cup  
of tea,

He looked to left, he looked to right, and then he  
glanced behind,

And slowly doffed his cabbage-tree, and said he  
'didn't mind.'

She made a shy apology because the meat was  
tough,

And then she asked if he was sure his tea was sweet  
enough ;

He stirred the tea and sipped it twice, and answer'd  
'plenty, quite ;'

And cut the smallest piece of beef and said that it  
was 'right.'

She glanced at him at times and cough'd an awkward  
little cough ;

He stared at anything but her and said, 'I must  
be off.'

That evening he went riding north—a sad and lonely  
ride—

She locked herself inside her room, and there sat  
down and cried.

They'd parted but a year before, they loved each other well—

But she was such a country girl and he was such a swell ;

They longed to meet in fond embrace, they hungered for a kiss—

But Mary called him 'Mister' and the idiot called her 'Miss.'

## REJECTED

SHE says she's very sorry, as she sees you to the gate ;  
    You calmly say ' Good-bye ' to her while standing  
        off a yard,  
Then you lift your hat and leave her, walking mighty  
    stiff and straight—  
    But you're hit, old man—hit hard.

In your brain the words are burning of the answer  
    that she gave,  
    As you turn the nearest corner and you stagger  
        just a bit ;  
But you pull yourself together, for a man's strong  
    heart is brave  
    When it's hit, old man—hard hit.

You might try to drown the sorrow, but the drink  
has no effect ;

You cannot stand the barmaid with her coarse and  
vulgar wit ;

And so you seek the street again, and start for home  
direct,

When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You see the face of her you lost, the pity in her  
smile—

Ah ! she is to the barmaid as is snow to chimney  
grit ;

You're a better man and nobler in your sorrow, for a  
while,

When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

And, arriving at your lodgings, with a face of deepest  
gloom,

You shun the other boarders and your manly brow  
you knit ;

You take a light and go upstairs directly to your  
room—

But the whole house knows you're hit.

You clutch the scarf and collar, and you tear them  
from your throat,

You rip your waistcoat open like a fellow in a fit ;  
And you fling them in a corner with the made-to-  
order coat,

When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You throw yourself, despairing, on your narrow little  
bed,

Or pace the room till someone starts with ' Skit !  
cat !—skit ! '

And then lie blindly staring at the plaster overhead—

You are hit, old man—hard hit.

It's doubtful whether vanity or love has suffered  
worst,

So neatly in our nature are those feelings interknit,  
Your heart keeps swelling up so bad, you wish that  
it would burst,

When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You think and think, and think, and think, till you  
go mad almost ;

Across your sight the spectres of the bygone seem  
to flit ;



The very girl herself seems dead, and comes back as  
a ghost,

When you're hit, like this—hard hit.

You know that it's all over—you're an older man by  
years,

In the future not a twinkle, in your black sky not  
a split.

Ah! you'll think it well that women have the privilege  
of tears,

When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

You long and hope for nothing but the rest that  
sleep can bring,

And you find that in the morning things have  
brightened up a bit ;

But you're dull for many evenings, with a cracked  
heart in a sling,

When you're hit, old man—hard hit.

## O'HARA, J.P.

JAMES PATRICK O'HARA, the Justice of Peace,  
He bossed the P.M. and he bossed the police ;  
A parent, a deacon, a landlord was he—  
A townsman of weight was O'Hara, J.P.

He gave out the prizes, foundation-stones laid,  
He shone when the Governor's visit was paid ;  
And twice re-elected as Mayor was he—  
The flies couldn't roost on O'Hara, J.P.

Now Sandy M'Fly, of the Axe-and-the-Saw,  
Was charged with a breach of the licensing law—  
He sold after hours whilst talking too free  
On matters concerning O'Hara, J.P.

And each contradicted the next witness flat,  
 Concerning back parlours, side-doors, and all that ;  
 'Twas very conflicting, as all must agree—  
 ' Ye'd betther take care !' said O'Hara, J.P.

But ' Baby,' the barmaid, her evidence gave—  
 A poor, timid darling who tried to be brave—  
 ' Now, *don't* be afraid—if it's frightened ye be—  
 ' Speak out, my good girl,' said O'Hara, J.P.

Her hair was so golden, her eyes were so blue,  
 Her face was so fair and her words seemed so true—  
 So green in the ways of sweet women was he  
 That she jolted the heart of O'Hara, J.P.

He turned to the other grave Justice of Peace,  
 And whispered, ' You can't always trust the police ;  
 ' *I'll visit the premises during the day,*  
 ' *And see for myself,*' said O'Hara, Jay Pay.  
( *Case postponed.* )

. . . . .

'Twas early next morning, or late the same night—  
 ' 'Twas early next morning' we think would be right—  
 And sounds that betokened a breach of the law  
 Escaped through the cracks of the Axe-and-the-Saw.

And Constable Dogherty, out in the street,  
Met Constable Clancy a bit off his beat ;  
He took him with finger and thumb by the ear,  
And led him around to a lane in the rear.

He pointed a blind where strange shadows were seen—  
Wild pantomime hinting of revels within—  
' We'll drop on M'Fly, if you'll listen to me,  
' And prove we are right to O'Hara, J.P.'

But Clancy was up to the lay of the land,  
He cautiously shaded his mouth with his hand—  
' Wisht, man ! Howld yer whisht ! or it's ruined  
we'll be,  
' It's the justice himself—it's O'Hara, J.P.'

They hish'd and they whishted, and turned themselves  
round,  
And got themselves off like two cats on wet ground ;  
Agreeing to be, on their honour as men,  
A deaf-dumb-and-blind institution just then.

Inside on a sofa, two barmaids between,  
With one on his knee was a gentleman seen ;  
And any chance eye at the keyhole could see  
In less than a wink 'twas O'Hara, J.P.

The first in the chorus of songs that were sung,  
The loudest that laughed at the jokes that were  
sprung,

The guest of the evening, the soul of the spree—  
The daddy of all was O'Hara, J.P.

And hard-cases chuckled, and hard-cases said  
That Baby and Alice conveyed him to bed—  
In subsequent storms it was painful to see  
Those hard-cases side with the sinful J.P.

Next day, in the court, when the case came in sight,  
O'Hara declared he was satisfied quite ;  
The case was dismissed—it was destined to be  
The final ukase of O'Hara, J.P.

The law and religion came down on him first—  
The Christian was hard but his wife was the worst !  
Half ruined and half driven crazy was he—  
It made an old man of O'Hara, J.P.

Now, young men who come from the bush, do you  
hear ?

Who know not the power of barmaids and beer —  
*Don't see for yourself !* from temptation steer free,  
Remember the fall of O'Hara, J.P.

## BILL AND JIM FALL OUT

BILL and Jim are mates no longer—they would scorn  
the name of mate—

Those two bushmen hate each other with a soul-con-  
suming hate ;

Yet erstwhile they were as brothers should be (tho'  
they never will) :

Ne'er were mates to one another half so true as Jim  
and Bill.

Bill was one of those who have to argue every day or  
die—

Though, of course, he swore 'twas Jim who always  
itched to argufy.

They would, on most abstract subjects, contradict  
each other flat

And at times in lurid language—they were mates in  
spite of that.

Bill believed the Bible story *re* the origin of him—  
He was sober, he was steady, he was orthodox ; while  
    Jim,  
Who, we grieve to state, was always getting into  
    drunken scrapes,  
Held that man degenerated from degenerated apes.

Bill was British to the backbone, he was loyal  
    through and through ;  
Jim declared that Blucher's Prussians won the fight  
    at Waterloo,  
And he hoped the coloured races would in time wipe  
    out the white—  
And it rather strained their mateship, but it didn't  
    burst it quite.

They battled round in Maoriland—they saw it  
    through and through—  
And argued on the rata, what it was and how it  
    grew ;  
Bill believed the vine grew downward, Jim declared  
    that it grew up—  
Yet they always shared their fortunes to the final  
    bite and sup.

Night after night they argued how the kangaroo was  
born,

And each one held the other's stupid theories in  
scorn,

Bill believed it was 'born inside,' Jim declared it was  
born out—

Each as to his own opinions never had the slightest  
doubt.

They left the earth to argue and they went among the  
stars,

*Re* conditions atmospheric, Bill believed 'the hair of  
Mars

'Was too thin for human bein's to exist in mortal  
states.'

Jim declared it was too thick, if anything—yet they  
were mates

Bill for Freetrade—Jim, Protection—argued as to  
which was best

For the welfare of the workers—and their mateship  
stood the test !

They argued over what they meant and didn't mean  
at all,

And what they said and didn't—and were mates in  
spite of all.



Till one night *the two together* tried to light a fire in  
camp,

When they had a leaky billy and the wood was scarce  
and damp.

And . . . No matter : let the moral be distinctly  
understood :

*One* alone should tend the fire, while the other brings  
the wood.

## THE PAROO

It was a week from Christmas-time,  
As near as I remember,  
And half a year since in the rear  
We'd left the Darling Timber.  
The track was hot and more than drear ;  
The long day seemed forever ;  
But now we knew that we were near  
Our camp—the Paroo River.

With blighted eyes and blistered feet,  
With stomachs out of order,  
Half mad with flies and dust and heat  
We'd crossed the Queensland Border.  
I longed to hear a stream go by  
And see the circles quiver ;  
I longed to lay me down and die  
That night on Paroo River.

'Tis said the land out West is grand—

I do not care who says it—

It isn't even decent scrub,

Nor yet an honest desert ;

It's plagued with flies, and broiling hot,

A curse is on it ever ;

I really think that God forgot

The country round that river.

My mate—a native of the land—

In fiery speech and vulgar,

Condemned the flies and cursed the sand,

And doubly damned the mulga.

He peered ahead, he peered about—

A bushman he, and clever—

' Now mind you keep a sharp look-out ;

' We must be near the river.'

The ' nose-bags ' heavy on each chest

(God bless one kindly squatter !)

With grateful weight our hearts they pressed—

We only wanted water.

The sun was setting (in the west)

In colour like a liver—

We'd fondly hoped to camp and rest

That night on Paroo River.

A cloud was on my mate's broad brow,  
And once I heard him mutter :

'I'd like to see the Darling now,  
'God bless the Grand Old Gutter !'  
And now and then he stopped and said  
In tones that made me shiver —

'It cannot well be on ahead,  
'*I think we've crossed the river.*'

But soon we saw a strip of ground  
That crossed the track we followed—  
No barer than the surface round,  
But just a little hollowed.

His brows assumed a thoughtful frown—  
This speech he did deliver :

'I wonder if we'd best go down  
'Or up the blessed river ?'

'But where,' said I, 's the blooming stream ?  
And he replied, 'We're at it !'

I stood awhile, as in a dream,  
'Great Scott !' I cried, 'is *that* it ?

'Why, that is some old bridle-track !'  
He chuckled, 'Well, I never !

'It's nearly time you came out-back—  
'This *is* the Paroo River !'

No place to camp—no spot of damp—

No moisture to be seen there ;

If e'er there was it left no sign

That it had ever been there.

But ere the morn, with heart and soul

We'd cause to thank the Giver—

We found a muddy water-hole

Some ten miles down the river.

## THE GREEN-HAND ROUSEABOUT

CALL this hot? I beg your pardon. Hot!—you don't know what it means.

(What's that, waiter? lamb or mutton! Thank you—mine is beef and greens.

Bread and butter while I'm waiting. Milk? Oh, yes—a bucketful.)

I'm just in from west the Darling, 'picking-up' and 'rolling wool.'

Mutton stewed or chops for breakfast, dry and tasteless, boiled in fat;

Bread or brownie, tea or coffee—two hours' graft in front of that;

Legs of mutton boiled for dinner—mutton greasy—warm for tea—

Mutton curried (gave my order, beef and plenty greens for me.)

Breakfast, curried rice and mutton till your innards  
sacrifice,

And you sicken at the colour and the smell of curried  
rice.

All day long with living mutton—bits and belly-wool  
and fleece ;

Blinded by the yoke of wool, and shirt and trousers  
stiff with grease,

Till you long for sight of verdure, cabbage-plots and  
water clear,

And you crave for beef and butter as a boozier craves  
for beer.

Dusty patch in baking mulga—glaring iron hut and  
shed—

Feel and smell of rain forgotten—water scarce and  
feed-grass dead.

Hot and suffocating sunrise—all-pervading sheep yard  
smell—

Stiff and aching green-hand stretches—‘Slushy’ rings  
the bullock-bell—

Pint of tea and hunk of brownie—sinners string  
towards the shed—

Great, black, greasy crows round carcass—screen  
behind of dust-cloud red.

Engine whistles. 'Go it, tigers!' and the agony  
begins,  
Picking up for seven devils out of Hades—for my  
sins ;  
Picking up for seven devils, seven demons out of  
Hell !  
Sell their souls to get the bell-sheep—half-a-dozen  
Christs they'd sell !  
Day grows hot as where they come from—too damned  
hot for men or brutes ;  
Roof of corrugated iron, six-foot-six above the shoots !

Whiz and rattle and vibration, like an endless chain  
of trams ;  
Blasphemy of five-and-forty — prickly heat — and  
stink of rams !  
'Barcoo' leaves his pen-door open and the sheep  
come bucking out ;  
When the rouser goes to pen them, 'Barcoo' blasts  
the rouseabout.  
Injury with insult added—trial of our cursing  
powers—  
Cursed and cursing back enough to damn a dozen  
worlds like ours.



‘Take my combs down to the grinder, will yer?’

‘Seen my cattle-pup?’

‘There’s a sheep fell down in my shoot—just jump down and pick it up.’

‘Give the office when the boss comes.’ ‘Catch that gory sheep, old man.’

‘Count the sheep in my pen, will yer?’ ‘Fetch my combs back when yer can.’

‘When yer get a chance, old feller, will yer pop down to the hut?’

‘Fetch my pipe—the cook ’ll show yer—and I’ll let yer have a cut.’

Shearer yells for tar and needle. Ringer’s roaring like a bull :

‘Wool away, you (son of angels). Where the hell’s the (foundling) WOOL!!’

. . . . .

Pound a week and station prices—mustn’t kick against the pricks—

Seven weeks of lurid mateship—ruined soul and four pounds six.

. . . . .

What's that? waiter? *me?* stuffed mutton! Look  
here, waiter, to be brief,  
I said beef! you blood-stained villain! Beef—moo-  
cow—Roast Bullock—BEEF!

## THE MAN FROM WATERLOO

*( With kind regards to " Banjo." )*

It was the Man from Waterloo,  
When work in town was slack,  
Who took the track as bushmen do,  
And humped his swag out back.  
He tramped for months without a bob,  
For most the sheds were full,  
Until at last he got a job  
At picking up the wool.  
He found the work was rather rough,  
But swore to see it through,  
For he was made of sterling stuff—  
The Man from Waterloo.

The first remark was like a stab  
That fell his ear upon,  
'Twas—' There's another something scab  
' The boss has taken on ! '

They couldn't let the towny be—  
They sneered like anything ;  
They'd mock him when he'd sound the 'g'  
In words that end in 'ing.'

There came a man from Ironbark,  
And at the shed he shore ;  
He scoffed his victuals like a shark,  
And like a fiend he swore.  
He'd shorn his flowing beard that day—  
He found it hard to reap—  
Because 'twas hot and in the way  
While he was shearing sheep.  
His loaded fork in grimy holt  
Was poised, his jaws moved fast,  
Impatient till his throat could bolt  
The mouthful taken last.  
He couldn't stand a something toff,  
Much less a jackaroo ;  
And swore to take the trimmings off  
The Man from Waterloo.

The towny saw he must be up  
Or else be underneath,  
And so one day, before them all,  
He dared to clean his teeth.

The men came running from the shed,  
And shouted, ' Here's a lark !'  
' It's gone to clean its tooties !' said  
The man from Ironbark.  
His feeble joke was much enjoyed ;  
He sneered as bullies do,  
And with a scrubbing-brush he guyed  
The Man from Waterloo.

The Jackaroo made no remark  
But peeled and waded in,  
And soon the Man from Ironbark  
Had three teeth less to grin !  
And when they knew that he could fight  
They swore to see him through,  
Because they saw that he was right—  
The Man from Waterloo.

Now in a shop in Sydney, near  
The Bottle on the Shelf,  
The tale is told—with trimmings—by  
The Jackaroo himself.  
' They made my life a hell,' he said ;  
' They wouldn't let me be ;  
' They set the bully of the shed  
' To take it out of me.

‘ The dirt was on him like a sheath,

‘ He seldom washed his phiz ;

‘ He sneered because I cleaned my teeth—

‘ I guess I dusted his !

‘ I treated them as they deserved—

‘ I signed on one or two !

‘ They won’t forget me soon,’ observed

The Man from Waterloo.

## SAINT PETER

Now, I think there is a likeness  
    'Twixt St. Peter's life and mine,  
For he did a lot of trampin'  
    Long ago in Palestine.  
He was 'union' when the workers  
    First began to organise,  
And—I'm glad that old St. Peter  
    Keeps the gate of Paradise.

When the ancient agitator  
    And his brothers carried swags,  
I've no doubt he very often  
    Tramped with empty tucker-bags ;  
And I'm glad he's Heaven's picket,  
    For I hate explainin' things,  
And he'll think a union ticket  
    Just as good as Whitely King's.

He denied the Saviour's union,  
Which was weak of him, no doubt ;  
But perhaps his feet was blistered  
And his boots had given out.  
And the bitter storm was rushin'  
On the bark and on the slabs,  
And a cheerful fire was blazin',  
And the hut was full of 'scabs.'

When I reach the great head-station—  
Which is somewhere 'off the track'—  
I won't want to talk with angels  
Who have never been out back ;  
They might bother me with offers  
Of a banjo—meanin' well—  
And a pair of wings to fly with,  
When I only want a spell.

I'll just ask for old St. Peter,  
And I think, when he appears,  
I will only have to tell him  
That I carried swag for years.  
'I've been on the track,' I'll tell him,  
'An' I done the best I could,'  
And he'll understand me better  
Than the other angels would.



He won't try to get a chorus

Out of lungs that's worn to rags,  
Or to graft the wings on shoulders

That is stiff with humpin' swags.  
But I'll rest about the station

Where the work-bell never rings,  
Till they blow the final trumpet  
And the Great Judge sees to things.

## THE STRANGER'S FRIEND

THE strangest things, and the maddest things, that a  
man can do or say,  
To the chaps and fellers and coves Out Back are  
matters of every day ;  
Maybe on account of the lives they lead, or the life  
that their hearts discard—  
But never a fool can be too mad or a 'hard case'  
be too hard.

I met him in Bourke in the Union days--with which  
we have nought to do  
(Their creed was narrow, their methods crude, but  
they stuck to 'the cause' like glue).  
He came into town from the Lost Soul Run for his  
grim half-yearly 'bend,'  
And because of a curious hobby he had, he was  
known as 'The Stranger's Friend.'

It is true to the region of adjectives when I say that  
the spree was 'grim,'

For to go on the spree was a sacred rite, or a heathen  
rite, to him,

To shout for the travellers passing through to the  
land where the lost soul bakes—

Till they all seemed devils of different breeds, and his  
pockets were filled with snakes.

In the joyful mood, in the solemn mood—in his  
cynical stages too—

In the maudlin stage, in the fighting stage, in the  
stage when all was blue—

From the joyful hour when his spree commenced,  
right through to the awful end,

He never lost grip of his 'fixed idee' that he was the  
Stranger's Friend.

'The feller as knows, *he* can battle around for his  
bloomin' self,' he'd say—

'I don't give a curse for the "blanks" I know — send  
the hard-up bloke this way ;

'Send the stranger round, and I'll see him through,'  
and, e'en as the bushman spoke,

The chaps and fellers would tip the wink to a casual,  
'hard-up bloke.'

And it wasn't only a bushman's 'bluff' to the fame  
of the Friend they scored,  
For he'd shout the stranger a suit of clothes, and he'd  
pay for the stranger's board—  
The worst of it was that he'd skite all night on the  
edge of the stranger's bunk,  
And never got helplessly drunk himself till he'd got  
the stranger drunk.

And the chaps and the fellers would speculate—by  
way of a ghastly joke—  
As to who'd be caught by the 'jim-jams' first—the  
Friend or the hard-up bloke?  
And the 'Joker' would say that there wasn't a doubt  
as to who'd be damned in the end,  
When the Devil got hold of a hard-up bloke in the  
shape of the Stranger's Friend.

It mattered not to the Stranger's Friend what the  
rest might say or think,  
He always held that the hard-up state was due to the  
curse of drink,  
To the evils of cards, and of company: 'But a young  
cove's built that way,  
'And I was a bloomin' fool meself when I started out,'  
he'd say.

At the end of the spree, in clean white 'moles,' clean-shaven, and cool as ice,  
He'd give the stranger a 'bob' or two, and some straight Out Back advice ;  
Then he'd tramp away for the Lost Soul Run, where the hot dust rose like smoke,  
Having done his duty to all mankind, for he'd 'stuck to a hard-up bloke.'

They'll say 'tis a 'song of a sot,' perhaps, but the Song of a Sot is true.

I have 'battled' myself, and *you* know, you chaps, what a man in the bush goes through ;  
Let us hope when the last of his sprees is past, and his cheques and his strength are done,  
That, amongst the sober and thrifty mates, the Stranger's Friend has *one*.

## THE GOD-FORGOTTEN ELECTION

PAT M'DURMER brought the tidings to the town of  
God-Forgotten :

‘There are lively days before ye—commin Parly-  
mint’s dissolved !’

And the boys were all excited, for the State, of  
course, was ‘rotten,’

And, in subsequent elections, God-Forgotten was  
involved.

There was little there to live for save in drinking  
beer and eating ;

But we rose on this occasion ere the news appeared  
in print,

For the boys of God-Forgotten, at a wild, uproarious  
meeting,

Nominated Billy Blazes for the commin Parly-  
mint.

Other towns had other favourites, but the day before  
the battle

Bushmen flocked to God-Forgotten, and the distant  
sheds were still ;

Sheep were left to go to glory, and neglected mobs of  
cattle

Went a-straying down the river at their sweet  
bucolic will.

William Spouter stood for Freetrade (and his votes  
were split by Nottin),

He had influence behind him and he also had the  
tin,

But across the lonely flatlands came the cry of God-  
Forgotten,

‘Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the land  
you’re living in !’

Pat M'Durmer said, ‘Ye schaymers, please to shut  
yer ugly faces,

‘Lend yer dirty ears a momint while I give ye all  
a hint :

‘*Keep ye sober till to-morrow and record yer vote for  
Blazes*

‘If ye want to send a ringer to the commin Parly-  
mint.

‘As a young and growin’ township God-Forgotten’s  
been neglected,

‘And, if we’d be ripresented, *now’s* the moment to  
begin—

‘Have the local towns encouraged, local industries  
purTECTED :

‘Vote for Blazes, and Protection, and the land ye’re  
livin’ in.

‘I don’t say that William Blazes is a perfect out-an’  
outer,

‘I don’t say he have the larnin’, for he never had  
the luck ;

‘I don’t say he have the logic, or the gift of gab, like  
Spouter,

‘I don’t say he have the practice—BUT I SAY HE  
HAVE THE PLUCK !

‘Now the country’s gone to ruin, and the Govern-  
ments are rotten,

‘But he’ll save the public credit and purTECT the  
public tin ;

‘To the iverlastin’ glory of the name of God-Forgotten

‘Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the land ye’re  
livin’ in !’



Pat M'D. went on the war-path, and he worked like  
salts and senna,

For he organised committees full of energy and  
push ;

And those wild committees riding through the whisky-  
fed Gehenna

Routed out astonished voters from their humpies  
in the bush.

Everything on wheels was 'rinted,' and half-sobered  
drunks were shot in ;

Said M'Durmer to the driver, 'If ye want to save  
yer skin,

'Never stop to wet yer whistles—drive like hell to  
God-Forgotten,

'Make the villains plump for Blazes, and the land  
they're livin' in.'

Half the local long-departed (for the purpose resur-  
rected)

Plumped for Blazes and Protection, and the country  
where they died ;

So he topped the poll by sixty, and when Blazes was  
elected

There was victory and triumph on the God-For-  
gotten side.

Then the boys got up a banquet, and our chairman,  
Pat M'Durmer,

Was next day discovered sleeping in the local  
baker's bin—

All the dough had risen round him, but we heard a  
smothered murmur,

'Vote for Blazes—and Protection—and the land  
ye're livin' in.'

Now the great Sir William Blazes lives in London,  
'cross the waters,

And they say his city mansion is the swellest in  
West End,

But I very often wonder if his toney sons and  
daughters

Ever heard of Billy Blazes who was once the  
'people's friend.'

Does his biassed memory linger round that wild  
electioneering

When the men of God-Forgotten stuck to him  
through thick and thin?

Does he ever, in his dreaming, hear the cry above the  
cheering:

'Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the land  
you're livin' in?'

. . . . .

Ah, the bush was grand in those days, and the  
Western boys were daisies,  
And their scheming and their dodging would outdo  
the wildest print ;

Still my recollection lingers round the time when  
Billy Blazes

Was returned by God-Forgotten to the 'Commin  
Parlymint' :

Still I keep a sign of canvas—'twas a mate of mine  
that made it—

And its paint is cracked and powdered, and its  
threads are bare and thin,

Yet upon its grimy surface you can read in letters  
faded :

'Vote for Blazes and Protection, and the Land  
you're livin' in.'

## THE BOSS'S BOOTS

THE shearers squint along the pens, they squint along  
the 'shoots ;'

The shearers squint along the board to catch the  
Boss's boots ;

They have no time to straighten up, they have no  
time to stare,

But when the Boss is looking on, they like to be  
aware.

*The 'rouser' has no soul to save. Condemn the rouse-  
about !*

*And sling 'em in, and rip 'em through, and get the bell-  
sheep out ;*

*And skim it by the tips at times, or take it with the  
roots—*

*But 'pink' 'em nice and pretty when you see the Boss's  
boots.*

The shearing super sprained his foot, as bosses sometimes do—  
And wore, until the shed cut out, one 'side-spring'  
and one shoe ;  
And though he changed his pants at times—some  
worn-out and some neat—  
No 'tiger' there could possibly mistake the Boss's  
feet.

The Boss affected larger boots than many Western  
men,  
And Jim the Ringer swore the shoe was half as big  
again ;  
And tigers might have *heard* the boss ere any harm  
was done—  
For when he passed it was a sort of dot and carry one.

But now there comes a picker-up who sprained his  
ankle, too,  
And limping round the shed he found the Boss's  
cast-off shoe.  
He went to work, all legs and arms, as green-hand  
rousers will,  
And never dreamed of Boss's boots—much less of  
Bogan Bill.

*Ye sons of sin that tramp and shear in hot and dusty  
scrubs,  
Just keep away from 'headin' 'em,' and keep away from  
pubs,  
And keep away from handicaps—for so your sugar  
scoots—  
And you may own a station yet and wear the Boss's  
boots.*

And Bogan by his mate was heard to mutter through  
his hair :

'The Boss has got a rat to-day : he's buckin' every-  
where—

'He's trainin' for a bike, I think, the way he comes  
an' scoots,

'He's like a bloomin' cat on mud the way he shifts  
his boots.'

Now Bogan Bill was shearing rough and chanced to  
cut a teat ;

He stuck his leg in front at once, and slewed the ewe  
a bit ;

He hurried up to get her through, when, close beside  
his shoot,

He saw a large and ancient shoe, in mateship with a  
boot.

He thought that he'd be fined all right—he couldn't  
turn the 'yoe ;'

The more he wished the boss away, the more he  
wouldn't go ;

And Bogan swore amenfully—beneath his breath he  
swore—

And he was never known to 'pink' so prettily  
before.

And Bogan through his bristling scalp in his mind's  
eye could trace,

The cold, sarcastic smile that lurked about the Boss's  
face ;

He cursed him with a silent curse in language known  
to few,

He cursed him from his boot right up, and then down  
to his shoe.

But while he shore so mighty clean, and while he  
screened the teat,

He fancied there was something wrong about the  
Boss's feet :

The boot grew unfamiliar, and the odd shoe seemed  
awry,

And slowly up the trouser went the tail of Bogan's eye.

Then swiftly to the features from a plaited green-hide  
belt —

You'd have to ring a shed or two to feel as Bogan  
felt —

For 'twas his green-hand picker-up (who wore a  
vacant look),

And Bogan saw the Boss outside consulting with his  
cook.

And Bogan Bill was hurt and mad to see that rouse-  
about ;

And Bogan laid his ' Wolseley ' down and knocked  
that rouser out ;

He knocked him right across the board, he tumbled  
through the shoot —

' I'll learn the fool,' said Bogan Bill, ' to flash the  
Boss's boot ! '

The rouser squints along the pens, he squints along  
the shoots,

And gives his men the office when they miss the  
Boss's boots.

They have no time to straighten up, they're too well-  
bred to stare,

But when the Boss is looking on they like to be  
aware.



*The rouser has no soul to lose—it's blarst the rouseabout !  
And rip 'em through and yell for 'tar' and get the bell-  
sheep out,  
And take it with the scum at times or take it with the  
roots,—  
But 'pink' 'em nice and pretty when you see the Boss's  
boots.*

'Rouseabout' and 'picker-up' are interchangeable terms in above rhymes, as also 'boss' and 'super'; the shed-name for the latter is 'Boss-over-the-board.' The shearer is paid by the hundred, the rouser by the week. 'Pink 'em pretty': to shear clean to the skin. 'Bell-sheep': shearers are not supposed to take another sheep out of pen when 'Smoke-ho,' breakfast or dinner bell goes, but some time themselves to get so many sheep out, and *one as the bell goes*, which makes more work for the rouser and entrenches on his 'smoke-ho,' as he must leave his 'board' clean. Shearers are seldom or never fined now.

## THE CAPTAIN OF THE PUSH

As the night was falling slowly down on city, town  
and bush,  
From a slum in Jones' Alley sloped the Captain of  
the Push ;  
And he scowled towards the North, and he scowled  
towards the South,  
As he hooked his little finger in the corners of his  
mouth.  
Then his whistle, loud and shrill, woke the echoes of  
the ' Rocks,'  
And a dozen ghouls came sloping round the corners  
of the blocks.

There was nought to rouse their anger ; yet the oath  
that each one swore  
Seemed less fit for publication than the one that went  
before.

For they spoke the gutter language with the easy flow  
that comes

Only to the men whose childhood knew the brothels  
and the slums.

Then they spat in turns, and halted ; and the one  
that came behind,

Spitting fiercely on the pavement, called on Heaven  
to strike him blind.

Let us first describe the captain, bottle-shouldered,  
pale and thin,

For he was the beau-ideal of a Sydney larrikin ;

E'en his hat was most suggestive of the city where we  
live,

With a gallows-tilt that no one, save a larrikin, can  
give ;

And the coat, a little shorter than the writer would  
desire,

Showed a more or less uncertain portion of his strange  
attire.

That which tailors know as 'trousers'—known by  
him as 'bloomin' bags'—

Hanging loosely from his person, swept, with tattered  
ends, the flags ;

And he had a pointed sternpost to the boots that  
    peeped below  
(Which he laced up from the centre of the nail of his  
    great toe),  
And he wore his shirt uncollar'd, and the tie  
    correctly wrong ;  
But I think his vest was shorter than should be in  
    one so long.

And the captain crooked his finger at a stranger on  
    the kerb,  
Whom he qualified politely with an adjective and verb,  
And he begged the Gory Bleeders that they wouldn't  
    interrupt  
Till he gave an introduction—it was painfully  
    abrupt—  
'Here's the bleedin' push, me covey—here's a  
    (something) from the bush !  
'Strike me dead, he wants to join us !' said the  
    captain of the push.

Said the stranger : 'I am nothing but a bushy and  
    a dunce ;  
'But I read about the Bleeders in the WEEKLY  
    GASBAG once :

‘Sitting lonely in the humpy when the wind began to  
“whoosh,”

‘How I longed to share the dangers and the pleasures  
of the push!

‘Gosh! I hate the swells and good ’uns—I could  
burn ’em in their beds;

‘I am with you, if you’ll have me, and I’ll break  
their blazing heads.’

‘Now, look here,’ exclaimed the captain to the  
stranger from the bush,

‘Now, look here—suppose a feller was to split upon  
the push,

‘Would you lay for him and fetch him, even if the  
traps were round?

‘Would you lay him out and kick him to a jelly on  
the ground?

‘Would you jump upon the nameless—kill, or cripple  
him, or both?

‘Speak? or else I’ll—SPEAK!’ The stranger answered,  
‘My kerlonial oath!’

‘Now, look here,’ exclaimed the captain to the stranger  
from the bush,

‘Now, look here—suppose the Bleeders let you come  
and join the push,

‘Would you smash a bleedin’ bobby if you got the blank alone ?

‘Would you break a swell or Chinkie—split his garret with a stone ?

‘Would you have a “moll” to keep yer—like to swear off work for good ?’

‘Yes, my oath !’ replied the stranger. ‘My kerlonial oath ! I would !’

‘Now, look here,’ exclaimed the captain to that stranger from the bush,

‘Now, look here—before the Bleeders let yer come and join the push,

‘You must prove that you’re a blazer—you must prove that you have grit

‘Worthy of a Gory Bleeder—you must show your form a bit—

‘Take a rock and smash that winder ?’ and the stranger, nothing loth,

Took the rock and—smash ! They only muttered  
‘My kerlonial oath !’

So they swore him in, and found him sure of aim and light of heel,

And his only fault, if any, lay in his excessive zeal ;

He was good at throwing metal, but we chronicle with  
pain

That he jumped upon a victim, damaging the watch  
and chain,

Ere the Bleeders had secured them ; yet the captain  
of the push

Swore a dozen oaths in favour of the stranger from  
the bush.

Late next morn the captain, rising, hoarse and thirsty  
from his lair,

Called the newly-feather'd Bleeder, but the stranger  
wasn't there !

Quickly going through the pockets of his 'bloomin'  
bags,' he learned

That the stranger had been through him for the stuff  
his 'moll' had earned ;

And the language that he muttered I should  
scarcely like to tell

(Stars ! and notes of exclamation !! blank and dash  
will do as well).

In the night the captain's signal woke the echoes of  
the 'Rocks,'

Brought the Gory Bleeders sloping thro' the shadows  
of the blocks ;

And they swore the stranger's action was a blood-  
escaping shame,

While they waited for the nameless, but the name-  
less never came.

And the Bleeders soon forgot him ; but the captain of  
the push

Still is 'laying' round, in ballast, for the nameless  
'from the bush.'



## BILLY'S 'SQUARE AFFAIR'

LONG BILL, the captain of the push, was tired of his  
estate,  
And wished to change his life and win the love of  
something 'straight';  
'Twas rumour'd that the Gory B.'s had heard Long  
Bill declare  
That he would turn respectable and wed a 'square  
affair.'

He craved the kiss of innocence ; his spirit longed to  
rise ;  
The 'Crimson Streak,' his faithful 'piece,' grew  
hateful in his eyes ;  
(And though, in her entirety, the Crimson Streak  
'was there,'  
I grieve to state the Crimson Streak was not a  
'square affair.')

He wanted clothes, a masher suit, he wanted boots  
and hat ;

His girl had earned a quid or two—he wouldn't part  
with that ;

And so he went to Brickfield Hill, and from a draper  
there

He 'shook' the proper kind of togs to fetch a 'square  
affair.'

Long Bill went to the barber's shop and had a shave  
and singe,

And from his narrow forehead combed his darling  
Mabel fringe ;

Long Bill put on a 'square cut' and he brushed his  
boots with care,

And roved about the Gardens till he mashed a 'square  
affair.'

She was a tony servant-girl from somewhere on 'the  
Shore ;'

She dressed in style that suited Bill—he could not  
wish for more.

While in her guileless presence he had ceased to chew  
or swear,

He knew the kind of barrack that can fetch a square  
affair.

To thus desert his donah old was risky and a sin,  
And 'twould have served him right if she had caved  
his garret in.

The Gory Bleeders thought it too, and warned him  
to take care

In case the Crimson Streak got scent of Billy's square  
affair.

He took her to the stalls ; 'twas dear, but Billy said  
' Wot odds ! '

He couldn't take his square affair amongst the crimson  
gods.

They wandered in the park at night, and hugged  
each other there—

But, ah ! the Crimson Streak got wind of Billy's  
square affair !

' The blank and space and stars ! ' she yelled ; ' the  
nameless crimson dash !

' I'll smash the blanky crimson and his square affair,  
I'll smash '—

In short, she drank and raved and shrieked and tore  
her crimson hair,

And swore to murder Billy and to pound his square  
affair.

And so one summer evening, as the day was growing  
dim,

She watched her bloke go out, and foxed his square  
affair and him.

That night the park was startled by the shrieks that  
rent the air—

The 'Streak' had gone for Billy and for Billy's square  
affair.

The 'gory' push had foxed the Streak, they foxed  
her to the park,

And they, of course, were close at hand to see the  
bleedin' lark ;

A cop arrived in time to hear a 'gory B.' declare  
'Gor blar-me ! here's the Red Streak foul of Billy's  
square affair.'

. . . . .

Now Billy scowls about the Rocks, his manly beauty  
marr'd,

And Billy's girl, upon her 'ed, is doin' six months  
'ard ;

Bill's swivel eye is in a sling, his heart is in despair,  
And in the Sydney 'Orspital lies Billy's square affair.

## A DERRY ON A COVE

'Twas in the felon's dock he stood, his eyes were black  
and blue ;

His voice with grief was broken, and his nose was  
broken, too ;

He muttered, as that broken nose he wiped upon his  
cap—

'It's orful when the p'leece has got a derry on a  
chap.

'I am a honest workin' cove, as any bloke can see,

'It's just because the p'leece has got a derry, sir, on  
me ;

'Oh, yes, the legal gents can grin, I say it ain't no  
joke—

'It's cruel when the p'leece has got a derry on a  
bloke.'

‘Why don’t you go to work?’ he said (he muttered,  
‘Why don’t you?’).

‘Yer honer knows as well as me there ain’t no work  
to do.

‘And when I try to find a job I’m shaddered by a  
trap—

‘It’s awful when the p’leece has got a derry on a  
chap.’

I sigh’d and shed a tearlet for that noble nature  
marred,

But, ah! the Bench was rough on him, and gave him  
six months’ hard.

He only said, ‘Beyond the grave you’ll cop it hot, by  
Jove!

‘There ain’t no angel p’leece to get a derry on a  
cove.’

## RISE YE! RISE YE!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers! claim your rights  
with fire and steel!

Rise ye! for the cursed tyrants crush ye with the  
hiron 'eel!

They would treat ye worse than sl-a-a-ves! they  
would treat ye worse than brutes!

Rise and crush the selfish tyrants! ku-r-rush them  
with your hob-nailed boots!

Rise ye! rise ye! glorious toilers!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!

Erwake! er-rise!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers! tyrants come across  
the waves!

Will ye yield the Rights of Labour? will ye? *will* ye  
still be sl-a-a-ves? !!!

Rise ye! rise ye! mighty toilers! and revoke the  
rotten laws!

Lo! your wives go out a-washing while ye battle for  
the caws!

Rise ye! rise ye! glorious toilers!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!

Erwake! er-rise!

Our gerlorious dawn is breaking! Lo! the tyrant  
trembles now!

He will sta-a-rve us here no longer! toilers will not  
bend or bow!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers! rise! behold, revenge  
is near;

See the leaders of the people! come an' 'ave a pint o'  
beer!

Rise ye! rise ye! noble toilers!

Rise ye! rise ye! glorious toilers!

Erwake! er-rise!

Lo! the poor are starved, my brothers! lo! our  
wives and children weep!

Lo! our women toil to keep us while the toilers are  
asleep!



Rise ye ! rise ye ! noble toilers ! rise and break the  
tyrant's chain !

March ye ! march ye ! mighty toilers ! even to the  
battle plain !

Rise ye ! rise ye ! noble toilers !

Rise ye ! rise ye ! noble toilers !

Erwake ! er-r-rise !

## THE BALLAD OF MABEL CLARE

YE children of the Land of Gold,  
I sing a song to you,  
And if the jokes are somewhat old,  
The main idea 's new.  
So be it sung, by hut and tent,  
Where tall the native grows ;  
And understand, the song is meant  
For singing through the nose.

There dwelt a hard old cockatoo  
On western hills far out,  
Where everything is green and blue,  
Except, of course, in drought ;  
A crimson Anarchist was he—  
Held other men in scorn—  
Yet preached that ev'ry man was free,  
And also ' ekal born.'

He lived in his ancestral hut—

His missus wasn't there—

And there was no one with him but

His daughter, Mabel Clare.

Her eyes and hair were like the sun ;

Her foot was like a mat ;

Her cheeks a trifle overdone ;

She was a democrat.

A manly independence, born

Among the trees, she had,

She treated womankind with scorn,

And often cursed her dad.

She hated swells and shining lights,

For she had seen a few,

And she believed in ' women's rights '

(She mostly got 'em, too).

A stranger at the neighb'ring run

Sojourned, the squatter's guest,

He was unknown to anyone,

But like a swell was dress'd ;

He had an eyeglass to his eye,

A collar to his ears,

His feet were made to tread the sky,

His mouth was formed for sneers.

He wore the latest toggery,  
The loudest thing in ties—  
'Twas generally reckoned he  
Was something in disguise.  
But who he was, or whence he came,  
Was long unknown, except  
Unto the squatter, who the name  
And noble secret kept.

And strolling in the noontide heat,  
Beneath the blinding glare,  
This noble stranger chanced to meet  
The radiant Mabel Clare.

She saw at once he was a swell—  
According to her lights—  
But, ah ! 'tis very sad to tell,  
She met him oft of nights.

And, strolling through a moonlit gorge,  
She chatted all the while  
Of Ingersoll, and Henry George,  
And Bradlaugh and Carlyle :  
In short, he learned to love the girl,  
And things went on like this,  
Until he said he was an Earl,  
And asked her to be his.

‘Oh, say no more, Lord Kawlinee,

‘Oh, say no more!’ she said;

‘Oh, say no more, Lord Kawlinee,

‘I wish that I was dead:

‘My head is in a hawful whirl,

‘The truth I dare not tell—

‘I am a democratic girl,

‘And cannot wed a swell!’

‘Oh love!’ he cried, ‘but you forget

‘That you are most unjust;

‘’Twas not my fault that I was set

‘Within the upper crust.

‘Heed not the yarns the poets tell—

‘Oh, darling, do not doubt

‘A simple lord can love as well

‘As any rouseabout!

‘For you I’ll give my fortune up—

‘I’d go to work for you!

‘I’ll put the money in the cup

‘And drop the title, too.

‘Oh, fly with me! Oh, fly with me

‘Across the mountains blue!

‘Hoh, fly with me! *Hoh, fly with me!*——’

That very night she flew.

They took the train and journeyed down—

Across the range they sped—

Until they came to Sydney town,

Where shortly they were wed.

And still upon the western wild

Admiring teamsters tell

How Mabel's father cursed his child

For clearing with a swell.

‘What ails my bird this bridal night,’

Exclaimed Lord Kawlinee ;

‘What ails my own this bridal night—

‘O love, confide in me !’

‘Oh now,’ she said, ‘that I am yaws

‘You’ll let me weep—I must—

‘I did desert the people’s cause

‘To join the upper crust.’

O proudly smiled his lordship then—

His chimney-pot he floor’d—

‘Look up, my love, and smile again,

‘For I am not a lord !’

His eye-glass from his eye he tore,

The dickey from his breast,

And turned and stood his bride before

A rouseabout—confess’d !

‘Unknown I’ve loved you long,’ he said,  
    ‘And I have loved you true—  
‘A-shearing in your guv’ner’s shed  
    ‘I learned to worship you.  
‘I do not care for place or pelf,  
    ‘For now, my love, I’m sure  
That you will love me for myself  
    ‘And not because I’m poor.  
‘To prove your love I spent my cheque  
    ‘To buy this swell rig-out ;  
‘So fling your arms about my neck  
    ‘For I’m a rouseabout !’  
At first she gave a startled cry,  
    Then, safe from care’s alarms,  
She sigh’d a soul-subduing sigh  
    And sank into his arms.  
He pawned the togs, and home he took  
    His bride in all her charms ;  
The proud old cockatoo received  
    The pair with open arms.  
And long they lived, the faithful bride,  
    The noble rouseabout—  
And if she wasn’t satisfied  
    She never let it out.

## CONSTABLE M'CARTY'S INVESTIGATIONS

Most unpleasantly adjacent to the haunts of lower  
orders

Stood a 'terrace' in the city when the current year  
began,

And a notice indicated there were vacancies for  
boarders

In the middle house, and lodgings for a single  
gentleman.

Now, a singular observer could have seen but few  
attractions

Whether in the house, or 'missus, or the notice,  
or the street,

But at last there came a lodger whose appearances  
and actions

Puzzled Constable M'Carty, the policeman on the  
beat.



He (the single gent) was wasted almost to emaciation,  
 And his features were the palest that M'Carty ever  
     saw,  
 And these indications, pointing to a past of dissipa-  
     tion,  
     Greatly strengthened the suspicions of the agent of  
     the law.  
 He (the lodger—hang the pronoun!) seemed to like  
     the stormy weather,  
     When the elements in battle kept it up a little  
     late;  
 Yet he'd wander in the moonlight when the stars  
     were close together,  
 Taking ghostly consolation in a visionary state.

He would walk the streets at midnight, when the  
     storm-king raised his banner,  
     Walk without his old umbrella,—wave his arms  
     above his head :  
 Or he'd fold them tight, and mutter, in a wild,  
     disjointed manner,  
     While the town was wrapped in slumber and he  
     should have been in bed.

198 CONSTABLE M'CARTY'S INVESTIGATIONS

Said the constable-on-duty: 'Shure, Oi wonther phwat  
his trade is?'

And the constable would watch him from the  
shadow of a wall,

But he never picked a pocket, and he ne'er accosted  
ladies,

And the constable was puzzled what to make of  
him at all.

Now, M'Carty had arrested more than one notorious  
dodger,

He had heard of men afflicted with the strangest  
kind of fads,

But he couldn't fix the station or the business of the  
lodger,

Who at times would chum with cadgers, and at  
other times with cads.

And the constable would often stand and wonder how  
the gory

Sheol the stranger got his living, for he loafed the  
time away

And he often sought a hillock when the sun went  
down in glory,

Just as if he was a mourner at the burial of the  
day.

Mac. had noticed that the lodger did a mighty lot of  
smoking,

And could 'stow away a long 'un,' never winking,  
so he could ;

And M'Carty once, at midnight, came upon the lodger  
poking

Round about suspicious alleys where the common  
houses stood.

Yet the constable had seen him in a class above  
suspicion—

Seen him welcomed with effusion by a dozen  
'toney gents'—

Seen him driving in the buggy of a rising politician  
Thro' the gateway of the member's toney private  
residence.

And the constable, off duty, had observed the lodger  
slipping

Down a lane to where the river opened on the  
ocean wide,

Where he'd stand for hours gazing at the distant  
anchor'd shipping,

But he never took his coat off, so it wasn't  
suicide.

200 CONSTABLE M'CARTY'S INVESTIGATIONS

For the constable had noticed that a man who's filled  
with loathing

For his selfish fellow-creatures and the evil things  
that be,

Will, for some mysterious reason, shed a portion of  
his clothing,

Ere he takes his first and final plunge into eternity.

And M'Carty, once at midnight—be it said to his  
abasement—

Left his beat and climbed a railing of considerable  
height,

Just to watch the lodger's shadow on the curtain of  
his casement

While the little room was lighted in the listening  
hours of night.

Now, at first the shadow hinted that the substance  
sat inditing ;

Now it indicated toothache, or the headache ;  
and again,

'Twould exaggerate the gestures of a dipsomaniac  
fighting

Those original conceptions of a whisky-sodden  
brain.

Then the constable, retreating, scratched his head and  
muttered 'Sorra

'Wan of me can undershtand it. But Oi'll keep  
me Oi on him,

'Divil take him and his tantrums; he's a lunatic,  
begorra!

'Or, if he was up to mischief, he'd be sure to douse  
the glim.'

But M'Carty wasn't easy, for he had a vague suspicion  
That a 'skame' was being plotted; and he thought  
the matter down

Till his mind was pretty certain that the business was  
sedition,

And the man, in league with others, sought to  
overthrow the Crown.

But, in spite of observation, Mac received no infor-  
mation

And was forced to stay inactive, being puzzled for  
a charge.

That the lodger was a madman seemed the only  
explanation,

Tho' the house would scarcely harbour such a  
lunatic at large.

202    CONSTABLE M'CARTY'S INVESTIGATIONS

His appearance failed to warrant apprehension as a  
vagrant,

Tho' 'twas getting very shabby, as the constable  
could see ;

But M'Carty in the meantime hoped to catch him in  
a flagrant

Breach of peace, or the intention to commit a  
felony.

(For digression there is leisure, and it is the writer's  
pleasure

Just to pause a while and ponder on a painful legal  
fact,

Being forced to say in sorrow, and a line of doubtful  
measure,

That there's nothing so elastic as the cruel Vagrant  
Act )

Now, M'Carty knew his duty, and was brave as any  
lion,

But he dreaded being 'landed' in an influential bog—  
As the chances were he would be if the man he had  
his eye on

Was a person of importance who was travelling  
*incog.*

Want of sleep and over-worry seemed to tell upon  
M'Carty :

He was thirsty more than ever, but his appetite  
resigned ;

He was previously reckoned as a jolly chap and  
hearty,

But the mystery was lying like a mountain on his  
mind.

Tho' he tried his best, he couldn't get a hold upon  
the lodger,

For the latter's antecedents weren't known to the  
police—

They considered that the 'devil' was a dark and  
artful dodger

Who was scheming under cover for the downfall  
of the peace.

'Twas a simple explanation, though M'Carty didn't  
know it,

Which with half his penetration he might easily  
have seen,

*For the object of his dangerous suspicions was a poet,*

*Who was not so widely famous as he thought he should  
have been.*

204 CONSTABLE M'CARTY'S INVESTIGATIONS

And the constable grew thinner, till one morning,  
    ' little dhramin'

    ' Av the sword of revelation that was leapin' from  
        its sheath,'

He alighted on some verses in the columns of the  
    FRAYMAN,

    '*Wid the christian name an' surname av the lodger  
        onderneath !*'

Now, M'Carty and the poet are as brother is to  
    brother,

    Or, at least, as brothers should be ; and they very  
        often meet

On the lonely block at midnight, and they wink at  
    one another—

    Disappearing down the by-way of a shanty in the  
        street.

And the poet's name you're asking ?—well, the ground  
    is very tender,

    You must wait until the public put the guilt upon  
        the name,

Till a glorious, sorrow-drowning, and, perhaps, a final  
    ' bender,'

    Heralds his triumphant entrance to the thunder-  
        halls of Fame.



## AT THE TUG-OF-WAR

'Twas in a tug-of-war where I—the guvnor's hope and  
pride—

Stepped proudly on the platform as the ringer on my  
side ;

Old dad was in his glory there—it gave the old man  
joy

To fight a passage through the crowd and barrack for  
his boy.

A friend came up and said to me, 'Put out your  
muscles, John,

'And pull them to eternity—your guvnor's looking  
on.'

I paused before I grasped the rope, and glanced  
around the place,

And, foremost in the waiting crowd, I saw the old  
man's face.

My mates were strong and plucky chaps, but very  
soon I knew

That our opponents had the weight and strength to  
pull them through ;

The boys were losing surely and defeat was very near,  
When, high above the mighty roar, I heard the old  
man cheer !

I felt my muscles swelling when the old man cheer'd  
for me,

I felt as though I'd burst my heart, or gain the  
victory !

I shouted, ' Now ! Together ! ' and a steady strain  
replied,

And, with a mighty heave, I helped to beat the other  
side !

Oh ! how the old man shouted in his wild, excited joy !

I thought he'd burst his boiler then, a-cheering for  
his boy ;

The chaps, oh ! how they cheered me, while the girls  
all smiled so kind,

They praised me, little dreaming, how the old man  
pulled behind.

. . . . .

He barracks for his boy no more—his grave is old  
and green,

And sons have grown up round me since he vanished  
from the scene ;

But, when the cause is worthy where I fight for  
victory,

In fancy still I often hear the old man cheer for me.

## HERE'S LUCK !

OLD Time is tramping close to-day—you hear his  
bluchers fall,

A mighty change is on the way, an' God protect us  
all ;

Some dust'll fly from beery coats—at least it's been  
declared.

I'm glad that wimin has the votes—but just a trifle  
scared.

I'm just a trifle scared—For why ? The wimin mean  
to rule ;

It makes me feel like days gone by when I was caned  
at school.

The days of men is nearly dead—of double moons  
and stars—

They'll soon put out our pipes, 'tis said, an' close the  
public bars.

No more we'll take a glass of ale when pushed with  
care an' strife,

An' chuckle home with that old tale we used to tell  
the wife.

We'll laugh an' joke an' sing no more with jolly beery  
chums,

An' shout 'Here's luck !' while waitin' for the luck  
that never comes.

Did we prohibit swillin' tea clean out of common-  
sense

Or legislate on gossipin' across a backyard fence ?

Did we prohibit bustles—or the hoops when they was  
here ?

The wimin never think of this—they want to stop  
our beer.

The track o' life is dry enough, an' crossed with many  
a rut,

But, oh ! we'll find it long an' rough when all the  
pubs is shut ;

When all the pubs is shut, an' gone the doors we  
used to seek,

An' we go toilin', thirstin' on through Sundays all the  
week.

For since the days when pubs was 'inns'—in years  
gone past 'n' far—

Poor sinful souls have drowned their sins an' sorrers  
at the bar ;

An' though at times it led to crimes, an' debt, and  
such complaints—

I scarce dare think about the time when all mankind  
is saints.

'Twould make the bones of Bacchus leap an' break  
his coffin lid ;

And Burns's ghost would wail an' weep as Bobby  
never did.

But let the preachers preach in style, an' rave and  
rant—'n' buck,

I rather guess they'll hear awhile the old war-cry :  
'Here's Luck !'

The world might wobble round the sun, an' all the  
banks go bung,

But pipes'll smoke an' liquor run while Auld Lang  
Syne is sung.

While men are driven through the mill, an' flinty  
times is struck,

They'll find a private entrance still !

Here's Luck, old man—Here's Luck !

## THE MEN WHO COME BEHIND

THERE'S a class of men (and women) who are always  
on their guard—

Cunning, treacherous, suspicious—feeling softly—  
grasping hard—

Brainy, yet without the courage to forsake the  
beaten track—

Cautiously they feel their way behind a bolder spirit's  
back.

If you save a bit of money, and you start a little  
store—

Say, an oyster-shop, for instance, where there wasn't  
one before—

When the shop begins to pay you, and the rent is off  
your mind,

You will see another started by a chap that comes  
behind.

So it is, and so it might have been, my friend, with  
me and you—

When a friend of both and neither interferes between  
the two ;

They will fight like fiends, forgetting in their passion  
mad and blind,

That the row is mostly started by the folk who come  
behind.

They will stick to you like sin will, while your  
money comes and goes,

But they'll leave you when you haven't got a shilling  
in your clothes.

You may get some help above you, but you'll nearly  
always find

That you cannot get assistance from the men who  
come behind.

There are many, far too many, in the world of prose  
and rhyme,

Always looking for another's 'footsteps on the sands  
of time.'

Journalistic imitators are the meanest of mankind ;  
And the grandest themes are hackneyed by the pens  
that come behind.



If you strike a novel subject, write it up, and do not fail,  
They will rhyme and prose about it till your very own  
is stale,

As they raved about the region that the wattle-  
boughs perfume  
Till the reader cursed the bushman and the stink of  
wattle-bloom.

They will follow in your footsteps while you're  
groping for the light ;  
But they'll run to get before you when they see you're  
going right ;  
And they'll trip you up and baulk you in their blind  
and greedy heat,  
Like a stupid pup that hasn't learned to trail behind  
your feet.

Take your loads of sin and sorrow on more energetic  
backs !

Go and strike across the country where there are not  
any tracks !

And—we fancy that the subject could be further  
treated here,

But we'll leave it to be hackneyed by the fellows in  
the rear.

## THE DAYS WHEN WE WENT SWIMMING

THE breezes waved the silver grass,  
Waist-high along the siding,  
And to the creek we ne'er could pass  
Three boys on bare-back riding ;  
Beneath the sheoaks in the bend  
The waterhole was brimming—  
Do you remember yet, old friend,  
The times we 'went in swimming?'

The days we 'played the wag' from school—  
Joys shared—and paid for singly—  
The air was hot, the water cool—  
And naked boys are kingly !  
With mud for soap the sun to dry—  
A well planned lie to stay us,  
And dust well rubbed on neck and face  
Lest cleanliness betray us.

And you'll remember farmer Kutz—  
    Though scarcely for his bounty—  
He leased a forty-acre block,  
    And thought he owned the county ;  
A farmer of the old world school,  
    That men grew hard and grim in,  
He drew his water from the pool  
    That we preferred to swim in.

And do you mind when down the creek  
    His angry way he wended,  
A green-hide cartwhip in his hand  
    For our young backs intended ?  
Three naked boys upon the sand—  
    Half buried and half sunning—  
Three startled boys without their clothes  
    Across the paddocks running.

We've had some scares, but we looked blank  
    When, resting there and chumming,  
One glanced by chance along the bank  
    And saw the farmer coming !  
And home impressions linger yet  
    Of cups of sorrow brimming ;  
I hardly think that we'll forget  
    The last day we went swimming.

## THE OLD BARK SCHOOL

It was built of bark and poles, and the floor was full  
of holes

Where each leak in rainy weather made a pool ;  
And the walls were mostly cracks lined with calico  
and sacks—

There was little need for windows in the school.

Then we rode to school and back by the rugged gully  
track,

On the old grey horse that carried three or four ;  
And he looked so very wise that he lit the master's  
eyes

Every time he put his head in at the door.

He had run with Cobb and Co.—‘that grey leader,  
let him go!’

There were men ‘as knowed the brand upon his  
hide,’

And ‘as knowed it on the course’ . Funeral ser-  
vice : ‘Good old horse!’

When we burnt him in the gully where he died.

And the master thought the same. ’Twas from  
Ireland that he came,

Where the tanks are full all summer, and the feed  
is simply grand ;

And the joker then in vogue said his lessons wid a  
brogue—

’Twas unconscious imitation, let the reader under-  
stand.

And we learnt the world in scraps from some ancient  
dingy maps

Long discarded by the public-schools in town ;

And as nearly every book dated back to Captain  
Cook

Our geography was somewhat upside-down.

It was 'in the book' and so—well, at that we'd let it  
go,

For we never would believe that print could lie ;  
And we all learnt pretty soon that when we came out  
at noon

'The sun is in the south part of the sky.'

And Ireland ! *that* was known from the coast-line to  
Athlone :

We got little information *re* the land that gave us  
birth ;

Save that Captain Cook was killed (and was very  
likely grilled)

And 'the natives of New Holland are the lowest  
race on earth.'

And a woodcut, in its place, of the same degraded  
race

Seemed a lot more like a camel than the black-  
fellows we knew ;

Jimmy Bullock, with the rest, scratched his head and  
gave it best ;

But his faith was sadly shaken by a bobtailed  
kangaroo.

But the old bark-school is gone, and the spot it stood  
upon

Is a cattle-camp in winter where the curlew's cry  
is heard ;

There's a brick-school on the flat, but a schoolmate  
teaches that,

For, about the time they built it, our old master  
was ' transferred.'

But the bark-school comes again with exchanges 'cross  
the plain —

With the OUT-BACK ADVERTISER ; and my fancy  
roams at large

When I read of passing stock, of a western mob or flock,  
With ' James Bullock,' ' Grey,' or ' Henry Dale' in  
charge.

And I think how Jimmy went from the old bark  
school content,

With his ' eddication ' finished, with his pack-horse  
after him ;

And perhaps if I were back I would take the self-same  
track,

For I wish my learning ended when the Master  
' finished ' Jim.

## TROUBLE ON THE SELECTION

You lazy boy, you're here at last,  
You must be wooden-legged ;  
Now, are you sure the gate is fast  
And all the sliprails pegged  
And all the milkers at the yard,  
The calves all in the pen ?  
We don't want Poley's calf to suck  
His mother dry again.

And did you mend the broken rail  
And make it firm and neat ?  
I s'pose you want that brindle steer  
All night among the wheat.  
And if he finds the lucerne patch,  
He'll stuff his belly full ;  
He'll eat till he gets ' blown ' on that  
And busts like Ryan's bull.



Old Spot is lost? You'll drive me mad,  
You will, upon my soul !  
She might be in the boggy swamps  
Or down a digger's hole.  
You needn't talk, you never looked ;  
You'd find her if you'd choose,  
Instead of poking 'possum logs  
And hunting kangaroos.

How came your boots as wet as muck ?  
You tried to drown the ants !  
Why don't you take your bluchers off,  
Good Lord, he's tore his pants !  
Your father's coming home to-night ;  
You'll catch it hot, you'll see.  
Now go and wash your filthy face  
And come and get your tea.

## THE PROFESSIONAL WANDERER

WHEN you've knocked about the country—been away  
from home for years ;

When the past, by distance softened, nearly fills  
your eyes with tears—

You are haunted oft, wherever or however you may  
roam,

By a fancy that you ought to go and see the folks at  
home.

You forget the family quarrels—little things that  
used to jar—

And you think of how they'll worry—how they  
wonder where you are ;

You will think you served them badly, and your own  
part you'll condemn,

And it strikes you that you'll surely be a novelty  
to them,

For your voice has somewhat altered, and your face  
has somewhat changed—

And your views of men and matters over wider fields  
have ranged.

Then it's time to save your money, or to watch it  
(how it goes!) ;

Then it's time to get a 'Gladstone' and a decent suit  
of clothes ;

Then it's time to practise daily with a hair-brush and  
a comb,

Till you drop in unexpected on the folks and friends  
at home.

When you've been at home for some time, and the  
novelty's worn off,

And old chums no longer court you, and your friends  
begin to scoff ;

When 'the girls' no longer kiss you, crying 'Jack !  
how you have changed !'

When you're stale to your relations, and their manner  
seems estranged ;

When the old domestic quarrels, round the table  
thrice a day,

Make it too much like the old times—make you wish  
you'd stayed away,

When, in short, you've spent your money in the  
fulness of your heart,  
And your clothes are getting shabby . . . Then  
it's high time to depart.

## A LITTLE MISTAKE

'Tis a yarn I heard of a new-chum 'trap'  
On the edge of the Never-Never,  
Where the dead men lie and the black men lie,  
And the bushman lies for ever.

'Twas the custom still with the local blacks  
To cadge in the 'altogether'—  
They had less respect for our feelings then,  
And more respect for the weather.

The trooper said to the sergeant's wife :  
'Sure, I wouldn't seem unpleasant ;  
'But there's women and childer about the place,  
'And—barrin' a lady's present—

'There's ould King Billy wid niver a stitch  
'For a month—may the drought cremate him !—  
'Bar the wan we put in his dhirty head,  
'Where his old Queen Mary bate him.

‘God give her strength!—and a peaceful reign—  
‘Though she flies in a bit av a passion  
‘If ony wan hints that her shtoyle an’ luks  
‘Are a trifle behind the fashion.

‘There’s two of the boys by the stable now—  
‘Be the powers! I’ll teach the varmint  
‘To come wid nought but a shirt apiece,  
‘And wid dirt for their nayther garmints.

‘Howld on, ye blaggards! How dare ye dare  
‘To come widin sight av the houses?—  
‘I’ll give ye a warnin’ all for wance  
‘An’ a couple of ould pair of trousers.’

They took the pants as a child a toy,  
The constable’s words beguiling  
A smile of something beside their joy;  
And they took their departure smiling.

And that very day, when the sun was low,  
Two blackfellows came to the station;  
They were filled with the courage of Queensland rum  
And bursting with indignation.

The constable noticed, with growing ire,  
They'd apparently dressed in a hurry ;  
And their language that day, I am sorry to say,  
Mostly consisted of 'plurry.'

The constable heard, and he wished himself back  
In the land of the bogs and the ditches—  
'You plurry big tight-britches p'liceman, what for  
'You gibbit our missuses britches?'

And this was a case, I am bound to confess,  
Where civilisation went under ;  
Had one of the gins been *less* modest in dress  
He'd never have made such a blunder.

And here let the moral be duly made known,  
And hereafter signed and attested :  
We should place more reliance on that which is shown  
And less upon what is suggested.

## A STUDY IN THE "NOOD"

'A SAILOR named Grice was seen by the guard of a goods train lying close to the railway-line near Warner Town (S.A.) in a nude condition. He was unconscious, and had lain there three days, during one of which the glass registered 110 in the shade. *Grice expressed surprise that the train did not pick him up.*'—Daily paper. In consequence, the muse :—

HE was bare—we don't want to be rude—

(His condition was owing to drink)

They say his condition was nood,

Which amounts to the same thing, we think

(We mean his *condition*, we think,

'Twas a naked condition, or *nood*,

Which amounts to the same thing, we think)

Uncovered he lay on the grass

That shrivelled and shrunk ; and he stayed

Three hot summer days, while the glass

Was one hundred and ten in the shade.



(We nearly remarked that he *laid*,  
But that was bad grammar we thought—  
It *does* sound bucolic, we think  
It smacks of the barnyard—  
Of farming—of *pullets* in short.)

Unheeded he lay on the dirt ;  
Beside him a part of his dress,  
A tattered and threadbare old shirt  
Was raised as a flag of distress.  
(On a stick, like a flag of distress—  
Reversed—we mean that the tail-end was up  
*Half-mast*—on a stick—an evident flag of  
distress.)

Perhaps in his dreams he persood  
Bright visions of heav'nly bliss ;  
And artists who study the nood  
Never saw such a study as this.  
The 'luggage' went by and the guard  
Looked out and his eyes fell on Grice—  
We fancy he looked at him hard,  
We think that he looked at him twice.

They say (if the telegram's true)

When he woke up he wondered (good Lord !)

'Why the engine-man didn't heave to—

'Why the train didn't take him aboard.'

And now, by the case of poor Grice,

We think that a daily express

Should travel with sunshades and ice,

And a lookout for flags of distress.

## A WORD TO TEXAS JACK

TEXAS JACK, you are amusin'. By Lord Harry, how  
I laughed

When I seen yer rig and saddle with its bulwarks  
fore-and-aft ;

Holy smoke ! In such a saddle how the dickens can  
yer fall ?

Why, I seen a gal ride bareback with no bridle on at  
all !

Gosh ! so-help-me ! strike-me-balmy ! if a bit o'  
scenery

Like ter you in all yer rig-out on the earth I ever see !  
How I'd like ter see a bushman use yer fixins, Texas  
Jack ;

On the remnant of a saddle he can ride to hell and  
back.

Why, I heerd a mother screamin' when her kid went  
tossin' by  
Ridin' bareback on a buckner that had murder in his  
eye.

What? yer come to learn the natives how to squat  
on horse's back!  
Learn the cornstalk ridin'! Blazes!—w'at yer giv'n' us,  
Texas Jack?  
Learn the cornstalk—what the flamin', jumtup!  
where's my country gone?  
Why, the cornstalk's mother often rides the day afore  
he's born!

You may talk about your ridin' in the city, bold an'  
free,  
Talk o' ridin' in the city, Texas Jack, but where'd yer  
be  
When the stock horse snorts an' bunches all 'is  
quarters in a hump,  
And the saddle climbs a sapling, an' the horse-shoes  
split a stump?

No, before yer teach the native you must ride without  
a fall  
Up a gum or down a gully nigh as steep as any wall—

You must swim the roarin' Darlin' when the flood is  
at its height

Bearin' down the stock an' stations to the great  
Australian Bight.

You can't count the bulls an' bisons that yer copped  
with your lasso—

But a stout old myall bullock p'raps 'ud learn yer  
somethin' new ;

Yer'd better make yer will an' leave yer papers neat  
an' trim

Before yer make arrangements for the lassooin' of  
*him* ;

Ere you'n' yer horse is catsmeat, fittin' fate for sich  
galoots,

And yer saddle's turned to laces like we put in blucher  
boots.

And yer say yer death on Injins ! We've got some-  
thin' in yer line—

If yer think your fitin's ekal to the likes of Tommy  
Ryan.

Take yer karkass up to Queensland where the ally-  
gators chew

And the carpet-snake is handy with his tail for a  
lassoo ;

Ride across the hazy regins where the lonely emus  
wail

An' ye'll find the black'll track yer while yer lookin'  
for his trail ;

He can track yer without stoppin' for a thousand miles  
or more—

Come again, and he will show yer where yer spit the  
year before.

But yer'd best be mighty careful, you'll be sorry you  
kem here

When yer skewered to the fakements of yer saddle  
with a spear—

When the boomerang is sailin' in the air, may heaven  
help yer !

It will cut yer head off goin', an' come back again and  
skelp yer.

P.S.—As poet and as Yankee I will greet you, Texas  
Jack,

For it isn't no ill-feelin' that is gettin' up my back,  
But I won't see this land crowded by each Yank and  
British cuss

Who takes it in his head to come a-civilisin' us.

So if you feel like shootin' now, don't let yer pistol  
cough—

(Our Government is very free at chokin' fellers off) ;  
And though on your great continent there's misery in  
the towns

An' not a few untitled lords and kings without their  
crowns,

I will admit your countrymen is busted big, an' free,  
An' great on ekal rites of men and great on liberty ;

I will admit yer fathers punched the gory tyrant's  
head,

But then we've got our heroes, too, the diggers that  
is dead —

The plucky men of Ballarat who toed the scratch  
right well

And broke the nose of Tyranny and made his peepers  
swell

For yankin' Lib.'s gold tresses in the roarin' days  
gone by,

An' doublin' up his dirty fist to black her bonny eye ;  
So when it comes to ridin' mokes, or hoistin' out the  
Chow,

Or stickin' up for labour's rights, we don't want  
showin' how.

They come to learn us cricket in the days of long ago,  
An' Hanlan come from Canada to learn us how to  
row,  
An' 'doctors' come from 'Frisco just to learn us how  
to skite,  
An' 'pugs' from all the lands on earth to learn us  
how to fight ;  
An' when they go, as like or not, we find we're taken  
in,  
They've left behind no larnin'—but they've carried  
off our tin.



## THE GROG-AN'-GRUMBLE STEEPLECHASE

'Twixt the coastline and the border lay the town of  
Grog-an'-Grumble

In the days before the bushman was a dull 'n'  
heartless drudge,

An' they say the local meeting was a drunken rough-  
and-tumble,

Which was ended pretty often by an inquest on the  
judge.

An' 'tis said the city talent very often caught a  
tartar

In the Grog-an'-Grumble sportsman, 'n' retired  
with broken heads,

For the fortune, life, and safety of the Grog-an'-  
Grumble starter

Mostly hung upon the finish of the local thorough-  
breds.

238 THE GROG-AN'-GRUMBLE STEEPLECHASE

Pat M'Durmer was the owner of a horse they called  
the Screamer,

Which he called the 'quickest shteppe'rtwixt the  
Darling and the sea ;'

And I think it's very doubtful if the stomach-  
troubled dreamer

Ever saw a more outrageous piece of equine  
scenery ;

For his points were most decided, from his end to his  
beginning,

He had eyes of different colour, and his legs they  
wasn't mates.

Pat M'Durmer said he always came 'widin a flip av  
winnin','

An' his sire had come from England, 'n' his dam  
was from the States.

Friends would argue with M'Durmer, and they said  
he was in error

To put up his horse the Screamer, for he'd lose in  
any case,

And they said a city racer by the name of Holy  
Terror

Was regarded as the winner of the coming steeple-  
chase ;

But he said he had the knowledge to come in when  
it was raining,

And irrelevantly mentioned that he knew the time  
of day,

So he rose in their opinion. It was noticed that the  
training

Of the Screamer was conducted in a dark,  
mysterious way.

Well, the day arrived in glory; 'twas a day of jubila-  
tion

With careless-hearted bushmen for a hundred miles  
around,

An' the rum 'n' beer 'n' whisky came in waggons from  
the station,

An' the Holy Terror talent were the first upon the  
ground.

Judge M'Ard—with whose opinion it was scarcely  
safe to wrestle—

Took his dangerous position on the bark-and-sapling  
stand :

He was what the local Stiggins used to speak of as a  
'wessel

'Of wrath,' and he'd a bludgeon that he carried in  
his hand.

' Off ye go !' the starter shouted, as down fell a stupid jockey—

Off they started in disorder—left the jockey where he lay—

And they fell and rolled and galloped down the crooked course and rocky,

Till the pumping of the Screamer could be heard a mile away.

But he kept his legs and galloped ; he was used to rugged courses,

And he lumbered down the gully till the ridge began to quake :

And he ploughed along the siding, raising earth till other horses

An' their riders, too, were blinded by the dust-cloud in his wake.

From the ruck he'd struggled slowly—they were much surprised to find him

Close abeam of Holy Terror as along the flat they tore—

Even higher still and denser rose the cloud of dust behind him,

While in more divided splinters flew the shattered rails before.

'Terror!' 'Dead heat!' they were shouting—

'Terror!' but the Screamer hung out

Nose to nose with Holy Terror as across the creek  
they swung,

An' M'Durmer shouted loudly, 'Put yer tongue out!  
put yer tongue out!'

An' the Screamer put his tongue out, and he won  
by half-a-tongue.

## BUT WHAT'S THE USE

BUT what's the use of writing 'bush'—  
Though editors demand it—  
For city folk, and farming folk,  
Can never understand it.  
They're blind to what the bushman sees  
The best with eyes shut tightest,  
Out where the sun is hottest and  
The stars are most and brightest.

The crows at sunrise flopping round  
Where some poor life has run down ;  
The pair of emus trotting from  
The lonely tank at sundown,  
Their snaky heads well up, and eyes  
Well out for man's manœuvres,  
And feathers bobbing round behind  
Like fringes round improvers.

The swagman tramping 'cross the plain ;

Good Lord, there's nothing sadder,

Except the dog that slopes behind

His master like a shadder ;

The turkey-tail to scare the flies,

The water-bag and billy ;

The nose-bag getting cruel light,

The traveller getting silly.

The plain that seems to Jackaroos

Like gently sloping rises,

The shrubs and tufts that's miles away

But magnified in sizes ;

The track that seems arisen up

Or else seems gently slopin',

And just a hint of kangaroos

Way out across the open.

The joy and hope the swagman feels

Returning, after shearing,

Or after six months' tramp Out Back,

He strikes the final clearing.

His weary spirit breathes again,

His aching legs seem limber

When to the East across the plain

He spots the Darling Timber !

But what's the use of writing 'bush'—

Though editors demand it—

For city folk and cockatoos,

They do not understand it.

They're blind to what the whaler sees

The best with eyes shut tightest,

Out where Australia's widest, and

The stars are most and brightest.



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